THE SOUND IMAGERY OF SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF SOUND IMAGERY DEFINED IN RELATION TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Although Samuel Taylor Coleridge ranks high with contemporary critics both as poet and critic, the perplexing nature of some of his seminal ideas continues to invite inquiry. The eclecticism of his position is not easily charted or categorized. Coleridge is difficult because he insists upon applying the imagination to achieve both synthesis and analysis. In doing so, he probes into the psychological process which results in creative writing. His attempt to structure his findings in relation to other theories in the fields of philosophy, theology, and psychology has left a wealth of material which has proved a fertile ground for those who have realized the depth of his search and his insight.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to present an analysis of sound imagery in "Kubla Khan," "The Ancient Mariner," and "Christabel" in order to determine its relation to the definition of imagination suggested by Coleridge; and (2) to search for possible sources of the sound imagery itself.

Importance of the study. Although Coleridge's poems have often been praised for their auditory effects, no definite role of the sound imagery in relation to the meaning of the poems has been suggested. Most of the studies involving the nature of sound in Coleridge's poetry have commented on its more limited acoustical or musical aspects. The present study was undertaken in expectation that the prominent sound imagery in Coleridge's three most famous poems might somehow be related to the meaning the poet intended to convey. The study is intended not to uncover unconscious assumptions harbored by Coleridge but to reveal any conscious attempts he might have made to utilize sound imagery as a part of his theory of imagination. Such a search seemed to the writer to be worthwhile in view of Coleridge's insistence that all parts of a poem should mutually support and explain each other.[1]

As an additional value, the writer felt that the exploration of sound imagery might aid in shedding light on Coleridge's statement that a poet should heed what Bacon called the vestigia communia of the senses.

> But the poet must likewise understand and command what Bacon calls the vestigia communia of the senses, the latency of all in each, and more especially as by a

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[1] S. T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. George Watson (New York: Dutton, Rep. 1962), p. 172.

> magical penna duplex, the excitement of vision by sound and the exponents of sound.[1]

One of the difficulties in understanding this passage is that Coleridge did not elaborate further on the distinctions of "sound" and the "exponents of sound." Sound defined as phoneme is limited to the realm of metrical composition with all the accoutrements of rhyme, alliteration, assonance, dissonance, and other auditory elements in poetry. These Coleridge called the "yeast" in poetry, but he insisted that in themselves they did not constitute the essence of poetry.[2] Sound imagery, however, is much more complicated. As Kenneth Burke points out, it translates an idea into sensory terms.[3] The distinction between phoneme and sound image, then, is one of great importance to this study. Sound imagery, unlike phoneme, may be involved in the perception not only of auditory phenomena but of visual phenomena as well.[4] A purely

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[1] Ibid., pp. 252-253. [2] Biographia Literaria, p. 172.

[3] Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives and A Rhetoric of Motives (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company), pp. 608-610.

[4] Arthur Wormhoudt, The Five Books As Literature (Eton, Windsor: The Shakespeare Head Press, 1961), pp. 13-43. The writer is much indebted to Arthur Wormhoudt for any understanding she has of the part played by auditory imagery in linking visual and tactual information. Although he does not bear responsibility for the assumptions concerning Coleridge in this paper, his five-part pattern of sublimation has been instrumental in providing stimulation and background for the writer. The introduction of Dr. Wormhoudt's latest book contains an excellent summary of the Wormhoudt theory.

auditory response to phoneme, for instance, is different from the response to auditory imagery, which is usually closely related to some kind of visual image, as when the ringing of a bell stimulates not only the hearing of the sound but the seeing of the bell as object. Since Coleridge was aware of Bacon's distinction between sound and the "exponents" of sound, it seems worthwhile to pursue the possibilities of structuring Coleridge's ideas concerning sound.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

It is generally agreed that Coleridge was greatly influenced by Platonic idealism. It has been suggested that there existed "no recorded line of thought with which he was unacquainted and with which his soul had not some bond of sympathy."[1] Nevertheless, Coleridge is believed to have been mostly affected by the kind of thinking which attempted to perceive the transcendent unity of all things. "He," said Coleridge, "for whom ideas are constitutive will in effect be a Platonist--and in those, for whom they are regulative only, Platonism is but a hollow affectation."[2] To some extent, Neoplatonic thought, with its more mystical development, is also thought to have influenced his views. But the

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[1]John H. Muirhead, Coleridge as Philosopher (Great Britain: Hollen St. Press Ltd., Soho W. 1, 1954), p. 35.

[2]Roberta F. Brinkley (ed.), Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century (Duke University Press, 1955), p. 553.

attempt of Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth century to explain the distinction between man's experience and his innate ability to reason is generally credited with shaping the direction of Coleridge. And at one time he had found in David Hartley's theory of association a meaningful structure for his thought, but his insistence upon a link between sensory perception and human reason led him to reject Hartley's mechanism as he did the empiricism of Locke and Hobbes. Among the German transcendentalists, Coleridge found a spirit of thought compatible with his own.

The exact nature of Coleridge's thought is obscured not only by his eclecticism but by his determination to erect a system of his own.[1] He saw himself as a prophet,[2]

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[1]Brinkley, p. 406. Coleridge had written to the editor of Blackwood:

> I cherish, I must confess, a pet system, a bye blow of my own Philosophizing, but it is so unlike to all the opinions and modes of reasoning grounded on the Atoms, Corpuscular and mechanic Philosophy, which is alone tolerated in the present day, and which the time of Newton has been universally taken as synonymous with Philosophy itself--that I must content myself with caressing the heretical Brat in private under the name of Zoodynamic method--or the doctrine of Life.

[2]Kathleen Coburn, ed., The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Vol. I (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1961), 1706 16.93. (There are no page numbers. First number refers to numeral assignation in Coburn's text; second to number given to the notebook itself; and third to entry number in notebook). Coleridge noted in 1804 that, in his early youth, he had experienced a vision of the origin of the planets. He had linked the vision with a transcendental spiritual law wherein the echo or reflection of all past activity was manifested in the present. Although he was intellectually unable to bridge the gap between the many and the one, he nevertheless believed in ultimate unity. He ended the entry with a notation, "For my own life--written as an inspired Prophet, --throughout."

and he bore a prophet's sensitivity to rejection.[1] His belief in unity penetrated to the core of language. His triune concept, strengthened by his discovery of Baxter's system of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis[2] and manifested by his ultimate denial of unitarianism, included language. The English language, according to Coleridge,

> . . . by its (monosyllabic, naturalizing, and) marvellously metaphorical Spirit can express more meaning, image, and passion tri-unely in a given number of articulate sounds than any other in the world, not excepting even the ancient Greek.[3]

In his system of thought, the trinity appeared to be basic.

In literature, Coleridge apparently found the epitome of applicability of his thought. Imagination, vital to creative writing, provided the unity for which he was seeking.[4]

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[1] Biographia Literaria, p. 85. In contemplating the "symbolic husk" enveloping ideas, Coleridge thought that those who intended to communicate truth in the form of ideas necessarily involved the logical contradiction of symbols. This necessity exposed the conveyor to personal danger from "malignant passions."

[2] Brinkley, p. 118. Coleridge gave Baxter credit for originating the theory which aided in forgoing a link between experience and reason.

[3] Coburn II, 2431 17.5 (See note 2, page 5 for explanation of code).

[4] S. T. Coleridge, Coleridge's Essays & Lectures on Shakespeare & Some Other Old Poets & Dramatists (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Rep. 1914), p. 39. Coleridge praised Shakespeare's imagination which resulted in the modification of many images or feelings by one. In his opinion, Shakespeare's portrayal of Lear's anguish combined "many circumstances into one moment of consciousness," and thus demonstrated the kind of fusion which forced "many into one."

Nevertheless, because he made the imagination all-inclusive--made it capable of both analysis and synthesis--he went far beyond the kind of association involved in theories which made imagination at its worst an automatic submission to sensory experience. But though he emphasized the importance of effecting unity in poetry, he did not make clear the constituency of the units. Thus, his poetic theory is clouded somewhat with ambiguity. This is apparent in his insistence that the imagination is the shaping faculty which reconciles dissipation and unification. Imagination, according to Coleridge, "diffuses and dissipates, in order to re-create."[1] Exactly what Coleridge meant by diffusion has not been completely explained. Nevertheless, it seems to the writer that these terms have had some influence on the direction of modern literary criticism. The term "dissipation" might be linked with a critical theory which asserts the solution of emotional problems through poetic reenactment. On the other hand, the term "diffusion" might be somehow exemplified in the New Critical stress on ambiguity and paradox. The emphasis on audience reaction by some critics like I. A. Richards might also be interpreted as an attempt to deal in part with the effects of poetic diffusion. Any direct correlation between these critical methods and exact intent by Coleridge

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[1] Biographia Literaria, p. 167.

in using his terms, however, has not been established. Whether or not he consciously used his theory in actually composing his work is also a matter of conjecture.

The part played by sound in Coleridge's concept of diffusion cannot be overlooked. The connection appears frequently in the notebooks. The sound made by a waterfall, which was one of Coleridge's most frequently observed phenomena, was described as a "diffused every where nowhereness."[1] The poet showed an awareness that sound resists encompassing by boundaries, and that its tendency to spread envelops what is not distinctly seen with a kind of mysterious aura. Watching the dawn from his window at Greta Hall in Keswick, he observed:

> The voice of the Greta, and the Cock-crowing: the Voice seems to grow, like a Flower on or about the water beyond the Bridge, while the Cock crowing is nowhere particular, it is at any place I imagine & do not distinctly see.[2]

Coleridge further observed the silence occurring after the moon disappeared from view, when the sound of the crowing and the river had subsided. The ticking of his watch and the slight noises of the flickering embers in his fireplace reminded him of the "perpetual yet seeming uncertain" quality of what he had observed, and he noted the "low voice of

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[1]Coburn I, 1706 16.93.

[2]Ibid., 1635 21.383.

quiet change, of Destruction doing its work by little & little."[1]

The destruction and change which Coleridge attributed to the sounds he heard are also examples of diffusion. The crowing cock, the flowing Greta, the ticking watch--all possess affinity not as objects but as sounds. They diffuse. They change, and they dissipate. The inclination he had to note the similarity in several of his experiences of hearing apparently gave Coleridge a more than usual appreciation of sound and its distinctive features.

A constitutional factor in Coleridge may have been responsible for his particular kind of interest in sound, for Coleridge himself seems to have been a victim of an unbridled tendency to diffuse. He digressed endlessly and admitted using

> five hundred more ideas, images, reasons &c than there is any need of to arrive at their object/ till the only object arrived at is that the mind's eye of the bye-stander is dazzled with colors succeeding so rapidly as to leave one vague impression that there has been a great Blaze of colours [sic] all about something.[2]

His great symphony of illustrations sounded impressive, but his labyrinthine structures were confusing. His listeners apparently often perceived only the "every where nowhere-ness" of his digressions, rather than the unifying assumption he was attempting to prove. He deplored the tendency

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Coburn II, 2372 21.552. See note 2, p. 5.

of his illustrations to swallow his thesis, but he defended his feeling "too intensely the omnipresence of all in each."[1] Coleridge displayed a diffusion in his thinking and talking, despite the fact that he championed unity. Nevertheless, when he succeeded in combining his talent for diffusion with his great visual power, as he seems to have done in his three most famous poems, he showed genius. His ability to link the diffusing powers of sound with the unifying or idealizing powers of vision gave his poetry a vibrancy many critics have found unsurpassed.

Diffusion evidently was at work in Coleridge's memory, which has been called one of the most extraordinary ones ever recorded.[2] His example of the phenomenal memory of the illiterate German girl who recited whole passages of Hebrew in her delirium[3] is not unlike his own demonstrations of remembering words and phrases he came across in his voluminous reading. Notorious for using phrases of other writers, he emphatically denied that he consciously adapted the words of others to his own use. His denials suggest that a number of sounds floated freely in his memory without being rigidly tied to systems or structures. In other words,

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Biographia Literaria, p. 65.

[3] Ibid.

Coleridge remembered sounds without their visual connotations, or at least he was able to separate words and phrases from their contexts so that they remained free to be adapted to new contexts. His ability to do this perhaps was in part responsible for his understanding of Descartes' observation that the images and impressions with which words are associated tend to dim until at last the conscious image is gone.[1] Coleridge realized, perhaps from experience, how words could excite feelings without the presence of attending images.[2] This realization seems to be a further indication of an awareness that sounds diffuse in a way that visual images do not.

Coleridge's awareness of the importance of diffusion extended to the fields of communication and language. In his famous lecture on Poesy or Art, he said that communication takes place paramountly by the memory in the ear.[3] He seems to be saying that the memory of sound somehow takes precedence over the retention of visual images. In fact, he stressed that nature is the visible, while man is the

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[1] Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century, ed. Roberta Florence Brinkley, Intro. by Louis Bredvold (Duke University Press, 1955), p. 86.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Coleridge's Essays & Lectures on Shakespeare & Some Other Old Poets & Dramatists (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Rep. 1914), p. 311.

audible.[1] The unity of the two was the important thing for Coleridge. It seemed to take place only in what he called the primary art of writing.[2] He noted the steps of progression of writing, which included in order: "mere gesticulation; then rosaries or wampun; then picture-language; then hieroglyphics, and finally alphabetic letters." The lower degrees of civilized communication were only visible, he said. The entire process was one which substituted the audible for the visible.[3] The gradual dissipation of pictures for sounds (which are even more easily diffused) can be seen at work in the process Coleridge outlined.

Coleridge did not limit his idea of diffusion to the phenomenon of sound, but eventually he linked sound with all that he could diffuse. In speaking of his liking for metaphysics, he wrote in a notebook that he hoped to make "Reason spread Light" over the feelings and to make the feelings "diffuse vital Warmth thro' out Reason."[4] He thought that our animal appetites must "diffuse themselves" in "all diversities of gradation & combination" so that they might blend and unify with all the many other sensations in

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Coleridge's Essays & Lectures, p. 311.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Coburn I, 1623 21.380.

the whole of experience.[1] Thus, it does not seem strange that Coleridge noted that his small son Hartley "seemed to learn to talk by touching his mother."[2] The alacrity with which children diffuse sounds interested Coleridge. Having noticed a child's inclination to pay more attention to sound than to meaning, he asked himself why children always seem to make new words analogously.[3] The child's auditory memory apparently played a part. Although a child's desire to hear a story repeated many times showed a weakness in memory of one sort, his ability for retaining certain words and images with "sealing wax accuracy" evinced an excellent memory of another type.[4] In this instance, it seems to the writer that Coleridge was recognizing that, although the young child could remember some sounds in connection with both words and images, his memory had not yet mastered the knack of retaining visual structures. This inability to determine structures was manifested in his failure to reconstruct the plots of stories by himself. Although he had heard the story often, he remembered it mostly as sound, and sound is easily diffused. Correspondingly, he may have been more interested in sounds than in form. It is interesting that

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[1] Coburn I, 979 21.131.

[2] Ibid., 867 21.81.

[3] Ibid., 1828 16.211.

[4] Ibid.

Coleridge remarked that idiots also manifested this same tendency to seize upon auditory experience in preference to visual. He suggested that perhaps they were even a trifle stronger in their capacity to remember isolated words and images.[1]

It is suggested that Coleridge's preoccupation with this kind of thinking demonstrates an unusual interest in the phenomenon of diffusion. This is borne out by what may be several of the strangest entries in Coleridge's notebooks. The entries center around an idiot with a clock.[2] The

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Lowes, pp. 28-29, noting the tenacity with which Coleridge appeared to cling to his image of the idiot, observed, "Coleridge's 'Idiot Boy' happily remained unwritten, but the escape seems to have been a narrow one. For half a dozen years after the magic of 'The Ancient Mariner' might be supposed to have exorcised the spell of imbeciles forever, the idiot and his clock were still hanging fire." The author has further pointed out a link with an 1803 note book entry which describes "Lack-wit and the clock" near a waterfall in a cave in Yorkshire. Lowes also attributes the interest in the idiot with Coleridge's fascination with abnormal psychology.

Evidence that the image extended to Coleridge's formulation of concepts is found, nevertheless, in a letter to Henry Crabb Robinson as late as 1811. See Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, II (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933) for letter containing the following:

> Were there not throughout in body and in soul, a corresponding and adapted Difference, there might be addition, but there could be no combination. One and one=2; but one cannot be multiplied into one. 1x1=1 At best it would be an idle echo, the same thing needlessly repeated --as the Idiot told the Clock--one, one, one, etc.

And in Coleridge's 1812 version of "Osorio," the play he revised under the title "Remorse," he interpolated a passage about an idiot boy, whose head swayed like the pendulum of a clock:

> 'Tis a poor Idiot Boy, Who sits in the Sun, and twirls a Bough about, His weak eyes seeth'd in most unmeaning tears.
> And so he sits, swaying his cone-like Head,
> And staring at his Bough from Morn to Sun-set,
> See-saws his Voice in inarticulate Noises.

following note, without satisfactory elaboration, appeared in the Gutch note book:

> An ideot whose whole amusement consisted in looking at, & talking to a clock, which he supposed to be alive--/ the Clock was removed--/ he supposed that it had walked off--& he went away to seek it--was absent nine days-- at last, they found, almost famish'd in a field-- He asked where it was buried--for he was sure it was dead--/ he was brought home & the clock in its place-- his Joy--&c He used to put part of everything, he liked, into the clock-case.[1]

The clock is evidently a kind of surrogate for the idiot, who derives comfort as well as amusement from it. The clock, however, can also be thought of as a kind of sound image if its ticking or striking has anything to do with the idiot's imagining it to be alive. The result of the clock's disappearance is the displacement of the idiot to a field, where he experiences near-starvation. And in this experience it seems clear that the attitude toward the clock undergoes a change. No longer certain the clock had only walked off, the idiot was convinced that it was dead and even buried. A non-rational type of thinking might associate the pains of hunger "buried" within with the pain of missing the clock and hence conclude that the clock must be buried. What is even more interesting about the anecdote, however, is the change in the idiot after the clock was restored. By putting things into the clock, he not only showed his affection for

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[1]Coburn I, 212 G. 208.
Also see Lowes, p. 28.

it, but he exhibited an extension of the same kind of thinking which prompted him to believe the clock was buried. Still associated with the seat of hunger, the clock appeared to have a pseudo-stomach. No one has determined just what the purpose of the anecdote was, but it is evident that it demonstrates a diffusion of appetite and also a diffusion of sound. This interpretation helps to explain the rather cryptic and terse entry appearing on another page of the Gutch notebook, "My Clock here (patting his guts) chime twelve--"[1]

Despite the reference to the lowly idiot, Coleridge appears to have been toying with a diffusion process which was all too well known to him in his own experience. A revealing entry in a notebook some years later (1803) found Coleridge admitting that his talk to those he loved often diffused his emotion because he so purposed it:

> Egotistic talk <u>with</u> <u>me</u> very often the effect of my Love of the Persons to whom I am talking/ My Heart is talking of them/ I cannot talk continuously of them to themselves--so I seem to be putting into their Heart the same continuousness as to me, that is in my own Heart as to them.--"[2]

The link between the sound of words and emotion explained for Coleridge much of the supernatural which could not other-

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[1] Coburn I, 57 G. 50.

[2] <u>Ibid</u>., 1772 16.158.

wise be explained. In a notebook entry in 1804 he asked, "Do not words excite feelings of Touch (tactual Ideas) more than distinct visual Ideas--i.e. of memory?" If so, he thought that this might explain many "popular notions concerning Ghosts & apparitions."[1]

That sound has the power to excite emotion has long been recognized in the field of music, but the relation of spoken sounds to emotion or meaning is usually considered an entirely subjective and hence mysterious process. Therefore, it is not surprising that Coleridge skirted an exact clarification of what he meant when he talked about tone as an element of organic unity in poetry. Because he could not make more explicit what he meant by tone and spirit, he said that magic played a part in the imaginative process.

> [The ideal poet] diffuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination.[2]

We have seen, however, that Coleridge did have a conception of diffusion in relation to both sound and emotion. He understood it through his experience, and he conjectured about it in his personal notebooks. The explanation of it in his literary biography was apparently quite another matter.

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[1] Coburn II, 2152 21.453.

[2] Biographia Literaria, p. 174.

Coleridge's failure to leave a logical explanation of diffusion may in part stem from its link with mysticism. His term can be related to certain mystical views expounded by Jacob Boehme, the famous German mystic who is also known by the name Jacob Behmen. Although the extent of his debt to Boehme is still being debated, it seems agreed that Coleridge read the writings of Boehme and greatly admired their contents. Extolling Boehme in his Biographia Literaria, Coleridge called him an "uneducated man of genius," who had conceived a "new and vital truth."[1] There is evidence that the poet had planned a literary exposition of Boehme as early as 1796[2] and as late as 1803.[3] Boehme had at least two things in common with Coleridge. He had a theory of unity, and he had a strange talent for diffusion. Categorizing all the powers of the deity and the human spirit, he did not perceive them as a rigid hierarchy but suggested a process of constant generation or rebirth in which all the powers were diffused and contained each in each.[4] One of the most unusual features of Boehme's early writing was his involved treatment of sound. According to Boehme, sound was the

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[1] Biographia Literaria, p. 82.

[2] Coburn I, 174 G. 169.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Jacob Boehme, The Aurora, trans. John Sparrow (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1960). Boehme outlines his theory in a long mystical treatise on the origin of sin and the process of redemption.

power responsible for diffusing the tone throughout the other powers and for keeping the "wheel" in constant motion.[1] The idea of sound as the harmonizing force is by no means original with Boehme. Nevertheless, he offers some interesting and puzzling innovations. Even in his later works, Boehme contended that the "Word which will teach must be living in the literal Word," and that "The Spirit of God must be in the literal sound."[2] He called the spirit of sound Mercurius and said that it belonged not to the "imaging or framing" power but to the "distinction, diversifying and mobility, especially to the joy, and to the distinction or difference in the imaging or shaping."[3] Thus, in Boehme, Coleridge found a theory of sound that, although mystically spelled out, was to some extent coincident with his experience.

The second reason suggested for Coleridge's vagueness about the diffusion of tone and spirit is that it could be easily confused with Hartley's association theory. Distinguishing visual imagery in accordance with the diffusion of sound imagery, even though it enlarged the scope of meaning or the spirit of the poem, might appear

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[1]Boehme, The Aurora, p. 622. Cf. p. 94.

[2]Jacob Boehme, Dialogues on the Supersensual Life, trans. William Law et al. (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 7.

[3]Boehme, The Aurora, p. 402.

structurally identical with the kind of mechanical association Coleridge deplored. Coleridge devoted nearly three chapters in Biographia Literaria to the explanation of association and his refutation of Hartley's theory. Coleridge disagreed with Hartley's thesis because of its mechanistic dependence upon contiguity in time or place.[1] A good example of association in this vein is seen in Sterne's Tristram Shandy, where accidents occurring in time and place are linked with their contiguous events. The interruption of Shandy's conception because of anxiety over failure to wind a clock became associated with a number of misfortunes involving time and shaped his future conception of ideas concerning himself. The associations, however, merely recalled what Coleridge termed the "total representation" of which the "partial representation" was only a part.[2] No will was involved. Coleridge deplored the theory of Hartley for its exclusion of the "will, reason, and judgement," in exchange for a willy-nilly state of lawlessness.[3] Even in his anecdote about the idiot and the clock, the idiot exercised, in all his crassness, a strong will. He left the scene of the disappearance of the clock and went to a field. There was not only a lack of proximity in place, where he

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[1] Biographia Literaria, p. 64.

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

made his strange association of his stomach with the clock, but there was a lack of proximity in time. Nine days had elapsed before he was reunited with the object of his association. Yet the net result of the experience looked very much like a simple case of association of the kind Hartley had noted. What then was the difference?

Coleridge indicated that something was missing in the reasoning of Hartley. The conditions of the law of association should not be mistaken for its essence. Its effects should not be equated with its causes. He thought that the process by which we note the results of association should not be confused with the actions involved in the total act of association.[1] He outlined a process of two parts. First, there must be a resistance to association, and second, a yielding to it.[2] If, as the writer has suggested, Coleridge had the kind of memory which could refrain from tying words and phrases to their contexts, this would be one way in which he could voluntarily resist association. The yielding part of the process, he said, was effected "in order to light on the spot which we had previously proposed to ourselves."[3] Thus, control of the association process could be

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[1] Biographia Literaria, p. 71.

[2] Ibid., p. 72.

[3] Ibid.

accomplished by (1) a refusal to engage in it and (2) a pre-arranged scope or limit in which it could flourish. The regulative feature of the law of association, then, was what Coleridge termed the vividness or distinction of a part from the total impression:[1]

> . . . whatever makes certain parts of a total impression more vivid or distinct than the rest will determine the mind to recall these in preference to others equally linked together by the common condition of contemporaneity or (what I deem a more appropriate and philosophical term) of continuity.[2]

Coleridge had found in his experience that sound diffuses. He was acutely responsive to sounds. Boehme's theory of sound as the power of "distinction, diversifying, and mobility" certainly must have seemed attractive to Coleridge. The writer hopes to show the effect of this attraction on the composition of "Kubla Khan," "The Ancient Mariner," and "Christabel."

III. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The purpose of the study was to investigate the sound imagery of the poems "Kubla Khan," "The Ancient Mariner," and "Christabel." Background for the study was obtained from reading Coleridge's Poetical Works, his Biographia Literaria, and his Essays & Lectures on Shakespeare & Some

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[1] Biographia Literaria, p. 73. [2] Ibid.

Other Old Poets & Dramatists. The writer also read the two volumes of notes from Coleridge's notebooks, edited by Kathleen Coburn and the two volumes of unpublished letters, edited by E. L. Griggs. Raysor's edition of Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism and Brinkley's Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century were also helpful in getting background for Coleridge's thinking about sound. Jacob Boehme's books The Aurora and Dialogues on the Supersensual Life in the Sparrow and Law translations furnished the writer with sources not only for a theory of sound but for sources of meaning linked to sound imagery in all three poems.

The writer will present the study of sound imagery through an analysis of the three major poems, "Kubla Khan," "The Ancient Mariner," and "Christabel." The theory which the writer developed as a result of reading Coleridge's works and his notebooks will to a great extent be used in the analysis. The theory states that Coleridge consciously used sound imagery both to develop and to intensify the meaning of his poetry. It states that sound can suggest meaning through association, which reflects a process of diffusion, and it states that sound imagery can be related organically to the theme of the poems. Through association of sounds a poem may be developed, and through organic relationship of sound imagery to visual imagery, theme or the meaning of the poem may be intensified.

The poems were studied as a unit in order to note comparisons and contrasts of sound imagery in all of them. In order to study them for the purpose of finding a possible unity existing in them, it was necessary to determine the best order in which to place them. So much uncertainty clouds the issue of their exact date of composition that the writer decided to use other criteria. Coleridge had said that he was preparing both "Christabel" and "The Ancient Mariner" for publication in the 1798 edition of Lyrical Ballads and that in "Christabel" he had hoped to realize his ideal more nearly than he had done in his first attempt.[1] Thus, it seemed logical to place "The Ancient Mariner" before "Christabel." That left the problem of where to place "Kubla Khan." The latter poem is the only poem for which there is disagreement about whether it is a fragment or a completed poem. Critics have debated the question. Coleridge's preface, however, in which he said that he frequently thought of finishing the poem, ended with a postscript saying, "but the tomorrow is yet to come."[2] It seemed not entirely outlandish to conjecture that the "tomorrow" may not have referred to "Kubla Khan" only, but

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[1] Biographia Literaria, p. 169.

[2] Earl Leslie Griggs, ed., The Best of Coleridge (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1934), p. 100.

to a subsequent poem. On that basis, the writer determined to treat the poem as a possible first in a series of three. The order of study was determined with "Kubla Khan" preceding "The Ancient Mariner," which in turn preceded "Christabel."

The writer then proceeded according to a policy of noting all sound images in the poem and then tracing all the possible associations of any sound elements involved within those images. Many of the associations were discarded. Only those which seemed to point up directions or meaning which already were inherent in the poems through the visual images were retained.

CHAPTER II

A SUGGESTED ANALYSIS OF "KUBLA KHAN" AND SOME POSSIBLE SOURCES FOR ITS SOUND IMAGERY

Although "Kubla Khan" is a comparatively short poem of fifty-four lines, few poems can rival its enchantment. Studies of its imagery have resulted in an awareness that Coleridge shaped and reshaped material from many sources in order to create it.[1]

Most critics agree that "Kubla Khan" is a notable poem. Humphrey House, for instance, has called it a "vision of the ideal human life as the poetic imagination can create it."[2] Beer, on the other hand, thinks the poem "was born out of Coleridge's visionary speculations."[3] Other writers value the poem in terms of its intense experience. Maude Bodkin, for example, who has evaluated the poem in terms of its meaning as archetype, assesses the importance

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[1] John Livingston Lowes, The Road to Xanadu (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930). Lowes has traced many sources of Coleridge's images in "Kubla Khan" and "The Ancient Mariner" to passages in various books read by Coleridge. His book is one of the most valuable studies made of the poet's sources of imagery.

[2] Humphrey House, Coleridge, the Clark Lectures 1951-52 (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953), p. 122.

[3] J. B. Beer, Coleridge the Visionary (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959), p. 278.

of its descriptive passages "hardly at all in the faint visual images aroused," but in the "far-reaching suggestiveness, so much harder to explore, that belongs to the words, and clings also about these image fragments."[1] Elisabeth Schneider comments, "Despite the image-making words, I do not find myself really picturing Kubla's pleasure-grounds." She finds herself more "charmed" with the poet's combination of words or the feelings evoked by them.[2]

No matter what the opinion concerning its most striking characteristics, "Kubla Khan" is the kind of poem which touches deeply if it touches at all. There is good reason for this. Although the poem concerns the creation of a vision, it does not concern a static vision. It unifies most unlikely images, a sunny dome with caves of ice. And to create the vision, the poet has apparently utilized a process of excitation and diffusion in which the images stir the context. They also stir the reader, particularly if he can hear the poem. The poem creates its full impact when allowed to transmit itself in feeling, seeing, and hearing. The grasp of sound is indispensable to "Kubla Khan" because most of its major images are in some degree sound images.

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[1]Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 95.

[2]Elisabeth Schneider, Coleridge, Opium and "Kubla Khan" (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 278.

In the writer's opinion, the sound imagery in "Kubla Khan" subtly diffuses to establish a pattern of tension. The tension in part results from putting sound into an emotional context. The emotions are then stirred or changed by the development of the sound imagery, and the changes can be noted as alterations in basic emotional outlooks. Stability as opposed to change is established by the use of visual images. In "Kubla Khan" the visual images exude mystery because they are so interwoven with sounds and feelings that the poem cannot be described in any other terms than those in which Coleridge has stated it.

The sound images in "Kubla Khan," perhaps with the exception of the first, are clearly discerned. They are: (1) the decree of Kubla Khan; (2) the wailing of the woman for her demon-lover; (3) the panting of the earth; (4) the tumult of the sacred river Alph and its progenitor the fountain; (5) the ancestral voices prophesying war; and (6) the sound of cave and fountain in mingled measure. A seventh major sound image in the poem is the symphony and song of the Abyssinian maid with her dulcimer. The latter is distinguished from the others by the fact that it is not heard but referred to as a vision. Only the results of its projected revival are contemplated.

The decree is perhaps the most subtle of the sound images. If it is viewed as a statement of order or design,

it can be thought of as a visual image. The word, however, is used as a verb; it is an auditory command. Kubla Khan did "decree" a "stately pleasure-dome." Thus, the image is not only a sound image, but it is an image of power. Kubla Khan, by decreeing, demonstrates a creative power which excites the anticipation of other evidences of it. This decreeing does not necessarily imply that the poem is about power, but it does imply that the poem sets up an atmosphere that is cognizant of power.

The development of the sound imagery illustrates how this anticipation of power grows into an awareness of productivity. The second sound image mentioned is the wailing of the woman for her demon-lover. The wailing can only be heard and not seen, although the woman who wails is a visual image. The sound she makes, however, cannot be abstracted by the intellect as a visual image unless it is somehow linked with some kind of productive emotion. In other words, the sound can be described only in subjective terms.[1] It might be suggested, then, that the wailing denotes distress. Somehow the woman is distressed with her

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[1]Roberta F. Brinkley, Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century, intro. by Louis I. Bredvold (Duke University Press, 1955), p. 563. Coleridge discusses the subjective effect of assonance and consonance on the "poet's ear" of lines from Milton's "Lycidas."

relationship to her demon-lover.[1] The nature of the relationship is unknown; and the extent of the distress is undetermined. The effect of the sound, outside its subjective associations, is known only insofar as it spreads to other images. The sound of the wailing diffuses within its locus or origin in the poem. The origin of the wailing is the "deep romantic chasm which slanted/ Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!" Because of the tendency of sound to diffuse, the wailing permeates the chasm, and the image of the chasm gathers to itself the ominous quality of the wailing.[2] This diffusion of the emotion of distress is not allowed to hover in its everywhere-nowhere vagueness. The place is "savage," but it is also "holy and enchanted." There is a twofold distinction. It is not a place limited to wild Dionysian orgy even though the wailing for a demon-lover somehow suggests aberrant behavior. The suggestive-

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[1]See Beer, Chapter IV, for a discussion of the nature of daemons in supernatural literature. The author discusses the ambivalence of daemons, who may be either good or evil influences--either agathodaemons or cacodaemons (p. 124).

[2]S. T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. George Watson (New York: Dutton, Rep. 1962), p. 48. Coleridge said one of Wordsworth's most admired qualities was his "original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere and with it the depth and height of the ideal world" around situation, forms, and incidents commonly regarded as ordinary. Cf. Coburn II, 2177 15.65. Coleridge, describing a scene with women and boys washing clothes in a mountain torrent, exclaims, "O this savage unforgettable scene!"

ness or the diffusion of the sound is controlled so that it is also constructive. It is the wailing beneath the "waning moon," which "haunts" the place, but the haunting is constructive because it is both "holy" and "savage." Thus, what has originated as a sound image has been magnified by an emotional context with both destructive and constructive overtones. Since the feelings cannot be clearly drawn, these overtones add confusion and mystification.

In the throes of an apparent demonic impulse, a new sound image is born. From the chasm issues the fountain, seething with turmoil. There is the suggestion that the new sound is productive not only in the diffusion of sexual overtones from the woman's wailing for her demon-lover wherein the fountain sounds as "if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing," but in its ability to approximate sounds which produce visions. Through its force "Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,/ Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:" This diffusion not only maintains the tension but extends the sound to a much larger area. There is also a sense in which the sound is now approaching a spatial emphasis. The sacred river Alph, "flung up momently" by the turmoil of the fountain, is seen as a vision moving over an area--"five miles meandering with a mazy motion/." The tension, however, is temporarily lost when the river reaches the "caverns measureless to man" and sinks in

"tumult to a lifeless ocean." It is significant that when the river's beginning and end are encompassed visually, there is no more tension.

A fourth sound image revives the tension; it suggests future distress. Although the ancestral voices suggest an ominous warning, they also function to encompass even more of a spatial and temporal area than did the wailing. It was confined to the chasm, but the voices extend from the past into the future. They speak from the authority of the past, and their prophecies of war are projected into the future. The sound of the voices renews the tension of emotional anticipation and also suggests a kind of visual judgment. Thus, it appears that there is a coming together of both sound and vision.

When the vision of the pleasure-dome with caves of ice is mirrored "midway on the waves," it is composed of shadow and sound. The visual shadow is diffused with the mingled measure of fountain and caves. The caves of ice are not seen even dimly in the shadow, but they are perceived there, nevertheless, through their sound. Through the excitation of vision by sound,[1] the unified images are not static but productive. The ear perceives the issuing energy

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[1]See pp. 2-3 of Chapter I for a discussion of Bacon's quotation commenting on the possibilities of meaning inherent in the definition of sound itself.

in the form of sound and aids the intellect in its awareness of the expending of creative power.

In the last stanza, which Coleridge called "the dream of pain and disease,"[1] there is no excitation of vision by sound as there was at the beginning of the poem in the auditory power of the decree. The poet remembers the vision of an Abyssinian maid with a dulcimer, but he does not demonstrate any auditory power in recreating the song or symphony which accompanies it. This difference between the first and second part appears to be an important distinction, because the power exemplified in the second part is not based on a demonstration of sound but on a visionary speculation. The poet speculates on his ability to revive the song; he speculates that it will excite the vision of those who hear it, when they see him build the dome with its caves of ice, not on the waves but in the air. The emphasis is not on the vision he will create, as it was in the first part, but on the poet himself. In the last part, the poetic fervor appears to be spent on the reconciliation of daemonic forces within the poet himself in order to promulgate his own productivity. And in narcissistically turning attention upon himself, he becomes the image of admiration and dread.

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[1] Earl Leslie Griggs, ed., The Best of Coleridge (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1934), p. 100.

> And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
> His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
> Weave a circle round him thrice,
> And close your eyes with holy dread,
> For he on honey-dew hath fed,
> And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Nevertheless, Coleridge has demonstrated a process of excitation by sound, even though it is an overtly emotional excitation of the dreamer or poet. And it results in a vision, even though it is a vision of the poet himself. The process is paradoxically both alike and different in the two parts. The distinction is in the initial stimulus. The vision was stimulated by sound in the first part; the result was a poetic reconciliation of sound and vision. In the second part, the vision was presented first and then stimulated by a kind of distressed yearning for the revival of the sound linked with it, which resulted in a narcissistic worship of the poet himself.

The importance of sound both to the process used by Coleridge and to the thematic structure of the poem can be seen further by noting an emerging pattern of apparent vacillation between stress and productivity. The distress of the wailing woman is followed by a productive agitation of the fountain. The agitation is followed by the projected conflict of the ancestral voices. The unity of dome and caves of ice again moves the pendulum to the side of productivity. The productivity results largely from a tension that involves both sound and visual imagery. In the

second part, the pattern can also be traced, although it is not developed by separate sound images. The yearning for the revival of the song of the Abyssinian maid is suggestive of the woman wailing for her demmn-lover. The delight that follows in its wake would be productive of the vision of dome and caves in air. The distress of his viewers again suggests the tension of emotional upheaval, but productivity follows:

> Weave a circle round him thrice,
> And close your eyes with holy dread,
> For he on honey-dew hath fed,
> And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Thus, in a sense, the second part of the poem mirrors the first. Nevertheless, it is almost a reverse image. The first part begins with the power of the creator and ends with a poetic vision; the second begins with the poetic vision and ends with the power of the creator.

SOME SUGGESTED SOURCES OF COLERIDGE'S IMAGERY

The question of the source and meaning of the visions in "Kubla Khan" is a fascinating one. Some scholars have speculated on the influence of Jacob Boehme on Coleridge.[1] It appears that much of what Coleridge has done

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[1]Beer, pp. 163-164. The author, who frequently cites Boehme's influence on Coleridge's determination of symbolic meaning for his imagery, has explored the nature of the Coleridge-Boehme relationship. He refers to Coleridge's

in "Kubla Khan" in linking sound with vision, not only through process but through theme, can be paralleled with some of the most unusual ideas of Boehme. For the great mystic, sound was both spirit and process; the spirit was the "tone," and the process of the tone generated both sound and "joy." Sound affected other qualities through its function as spring or source of all their movements.[1] Coleridge's use of sound as an excitation of vision, thus, had a root in Boehme as well as in Bacon. The suggestion that sound generates joy also demonstrates that Boehme linked sound with the emotions. We have already seen that Coleridge created poetic tension by the diffusion of sound with emotion. That he had speculated on the interrelationship of the two can be seen by returning to Coleridge's old anecdote concerning the idiot and his clock. The idiot, identifying his hunger rumblings with the ticking of a clock,

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letter to Tieck, in which Coleridge remembered adopting the idea, "(probably from Behmen's Aurora, which I had conjured over at school)," that the phenomena of sound and light were interrelated. Coleridge said, "Sound was = Light under the praepotence of Gravitation, and Color = Gravitation under the praepotence of Light: and I have never seen reason to change my faith in this respect." Beer comments: "It would be difficult to find a better example of Coleridge's lifelong quest for harmonious unity in the universe than his attempt, both in poetry and speculation, to see light and sound as varying manifestations of a single identity."

[1]Jacob Boehme, The Aurora, trans. by John Sparrow, ed. by C. J. Barker and D. S. Hehner (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1960), p. 458.

merged the two in his mind so that the emotion attending his hunger was diffused to include the visual image of the clock. When the clock was returned to its original place, the idiot found joy by putting part of everything he liked into the "pseudo-stomach" of the clock case. Thus, in his speculation, Coleridge had found a neat way to combine emotion, sound, and vision by a non-rational or auditory process. The value of the process was that it diffused or maintained tension.

Boehme also realized the power of diffusion in regard to sound. He wrote in his early work, The Aurora, that the tone, or Mercurius, originated as a first quality. Although it was first "in order to the imaging, framing and forming of a creature," it was not given any rank or status of power as a productive force. It was one of seven spirits which took part in the constant generation, "one in another."[1] Thus, all the powers diffused, but in order of diffusion it appears that sound was first.

Boehme also had a curious explanation for the relation of sound to good and evil. He assigned to sound a role in what he called the inward birth, or that which is constantly generated into light, wherein lies the heart of God. Because sound must rise in light in a wrath-producing quality

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[1]Boehme, The Aurora, p. 207.

called the "fire-flash," it attracted to it both good and evil.[1] The inclination of the soul to image itself after the serpent-image[2] began with the enkindling of Mercurius, which resulted from its union with fiery desire.[3] Thus, sound, linked with lust, produced evil. Sound, linked with love, in the generation of all seven spirits, resulted in the good generation of light.[4] Good and evil were highly diffused states; they were everywhere. According to Boehme, there was "nothing in nature wherein there is not good and evil; everything moveth and liveth in this double impulse, working or operation, be what it will."[5] Thus, Boehme had a system in which the alliance of sound with emotion, excluding the visual faculties, was evil; as part of a three-fold process which generated light or vision, the link of sound with emotion was good.

Boehme's system is reflected in Coleridge's structure of "Kubla Khan." The wailing of the woman for her demon-lover in isolation was a situation of stress as long as the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 574-575.

[2] Jacob Boehme, The Way to Christ, trans. by John Joseph Stoudt (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 140. Boehme depicts the serpent-image as a snake with its tail in its mouth.

[3] Ibid., p. 141.

[4] Boehme, The Aurora, pp. 620-621.

[5] Ibid., pp. 51.

sound was emphasized. The sound penetrated to the chasm, however, linking with the turmoil of the fountain. The meaning of the wailing could not be determined by its sound alone, but by its connection with a visual image such as the woman wailing for her demon-lover. Sound may excite the intellect toward a vision which contains suggestions of sound, but it cannot replace the vision itself. Therefore, sound can lead either to devastating emotional chaos or to enlightened vision.

Boehme also believed that the sounds uttered by the tongue somehow manifested an original quality derived from the senses or the heart.[1] He speculated that the physical action of pronouncing a word somehow revealed its meaning.[2] He used words in hidden, mystical ways, which he said were "understood" only in the "language of nature."[3] Despite the fact that his verbal eccentricities often obscured his meaning, he demonstrated a realization that words affected the hearer not only as meaning but as sound, and that sound itself was a moving force.

Coleridge also appeared to be aware of the power of

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[1] Ibid., pp. 122-123.

[2] Ibid., pp. 174-177. For example, the forming of certain syllables by the lips entails a kind of snarling which denotes the quality which distinguishes it.

[3] Ibid., p. 715.

sound to direct the intellect in probing for peripheral meanings. He also had a penchant for changing words to add mystery. A well-known example of this is his thinly disguised substitute of "Asra" for the name Sara.[1] This habit of word alteration suggests further speculation on a possible source for imagery of "Kubla Khan." Additional meaning, for instance, is in the image of the Abyssinian maid, if attention is paid to the sound within the sound. The word "abyss" is heard quickly as the word "Abyssinian" is pronounced. Although it is almost imperceptible, it is there, and it gathers impetus as the poem is read and reread. And it is structurally important because it links the Abyssinian maid with the wailing woman in the mysterious chasm of the first part of the poem. The abyss and the chasm can be paralleled. Coleridge's use of this idea in relation to the Abyssinian maid is suggested strongly in his preface to the poem, wherein he said that the second part was the dream of pain and disease.

Paying strict attention again to sound, the image of

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[1]The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. James Dykes Campbell (Chicago: The Macmillan Company, Rep., 1925), p. 171. Coleridge's poem, entitled "To Asra," contains reference to "Dear Asra, woman beyond utterance dear."

Mount Abora,[1] heard as a kind of auditory ellipsis, might even suggest the Aurora Borealis, if one remembers Coleridge's comparison of it to a flashing inward vision, which is both "immediate object and ultimate organ of inward vision," which can shape images out of past and present.[2] The suggestion that the image is related to Boehme's Aurora yields even more meaningful associations. Several times Boehme referred to the Aurora, which he said meant "The Day-Spring or Dawning in the East, or Morning-Redness in the Rising,"[3] as that which was long ago decreed.[4] Boehme also said that sound was the "chariot" on which rode the spirit that executed the decree.[5] Coleridge's uses of sound to

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[1]Lowes, pp. 373-376. Prof. Lowes has pointed out more than one possible source for the image of Mount Abora. Milton's earthly paradise, in the fourth book of Paradise Lost, is Mount Amara. Lowes also cites the possibility of Bruce's river Abola, tributary of the Nile, and the Astaboras, also found in Bruce. The latter was described as "tearing up rocks" . . . and "forcing down their broken fragments." In pointing out that Coleridge was capable of fusing abstractions from several images, while at the same time retaining their most significant meanings, Lowes has laid a foundation for the speculation that what Coleridge did with two or three images he may have done with several more without sacrificing any meaningful components. The diffusing and assimilating genius of Coleridge may thus have been also influenced by Boehme's earthly paradise, the short-lived dawning experienced in The Aurora.

[2]Biographia Literaria, p. 59. Coleridge did not believe in the validity of an inward vision which was complete in itself.

[3]Boehme, The Aurora, p. 582.

[4]Ibid., p. 634. [5]Ibid., p. 403.

excite the vision in "Kubla Khan" are so striking that it might be suggested that the poet may well have based much of his idea of the poem on Boehme's mystical theory of sound. This suggestion, of course, is contrary to the view that the poem had its inception in an opium dream. Coleridge's interest in the aforementioned passage from Boehme is established more strongly by the fact that directly preceding and following it is an assertion of the diversifying power of sound, which

> uniteth, qualifieth or co-operateth with the same [corpus or body, or spirit of nature] in the forming or framing, and also in the distinguishing or diversifying of the imaging or shaping.[1]

The imagination of Coleridge was a shaping power. It is interesting that Coleridge displayed his old habit of altering sounds of words in coining the word which denoted this shaping power. Out of the Greek words, εἰς ἐν πλαττειν, Coleridge fashioned the word "esemplastic."[2]

The part played by sound imagery as the "distinguishing" component in the imagination does not negate other meanings which adhere to the visual imagery. Indeed, it seems that many of Coleridge's images derived meaning from many sources and that Coleridge deliberately chose those which would attract many shades and levels of meaning.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Biographia Literaria, p. 91.

Poetry, like philosophy, should make distinctions without disturbing the unity in which they coexist.[1] Thus, the abyss within Abyssinian does not necessarily detract from other sources which have been found for the image as a whole. It enriches the meaning, however, and adds one more support to Coleridge's contention that poetry cannot be translated into other words without sacrificing its meaning. Meaning includes not only the word's "correspondent object, but likewise all the associations which it recalls."[2] Coleridge said that "language is framed to convey not the object alone, but likewise the character, mood, and intentions of the person who is representing it."[3] Multi-faceted meanings which hinged upon sounds as well as objects enriched Coleridge's poems because they enabled him to create a tantalizing complexity which yielded many forms to those who sought to untangle it.

Boehme's conception of what he called the principle of all principles may have been in part responsible for the choice of the name of the river in "Kubla Khan." Love, the "first mover and first moveable, both in heaven above, and in the water under the earth," was given the name of

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[1] Ibid., p. 171.

[2] Ibid., p. 263.

[3] Ibid.

> the Lucid Aleph or Alpha; by which is expressed the beginning of the Alphabet of Nature, and of the Book of Creation and Providence or the Divine Archetypal Book, in which is the Light of Wisdom and the source of all lights and forms.[1]

The triple association of light, sound, and love, inherently manifested in Boehme's image would have appealed to Coleridge, who might well have had it in mind when he chose Alph as the name of his sacred river in "Kubla Khan." It is the tumult of the river which creates the sound in the caves of ice, and it is presumably on the waves of the river that the vision takes place. The woman wailing for her demon-lover attests to the power of love as energy which, with sound, was transmuted throughout the chasm from which the fountain emanated. Boehme said that love contained "the very life and energy of all principles of Nature, superior and inferior."[2]

Even the mysterious circumstances surrounding the composition of the poem "Kubla Khan" bear a certain resemblance to the composition of The Aurora. Both writers were prevented from finishing their work. Coleridge was interrupted by a man from Porlock, who obliterated from his mind most of the two or three hundred lines he had composed in a "profound sleep" of the "external senses."[3] Boehme's book

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[1]Jacob Boehme, Dialogues on the Supersensual Life, trans. by William Law et al., Bernard Holland, ed. (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 44.

[2]Ibid. [3]Griggs, pp. 99-100.

was stolen from him by the Primarius, Greg. Richter, before he had finished it.[1] Boehme also declared that, although the book lacked about thirty pages, he intended to supply the "defect" in other books.[2] Thus, it appears that Boehme conceived of his writing as a unified whole. It is said that The Aurora, though profound in its simplicity as opposed to dissertation, bears the "kernel, or a short epitome, of all the author's works."[3]

There is some indication that Coleridge intended "Kubla Khan" to be the kernel around which he would build a triad of poems which would be unified organically. The themes bear a similarity in many instances. All three poems are striking in their use of sound imagery, and it can be shown that the sound images are related to the thematic structures of the poems. The writer has attempted to show that the creative power, for instance, involved the linking of sound with vision in both parts of "Kubla Khan." There are also instances in which the poems seem to grow out of each other. A remarkable example of this is the apparent relationship between the image "Kubla Khan" and the "Albatross" in "The Ancient Mariner." The two sound much

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[1] Boehme, The Aurora, p. xviii (intro.).

[2] Ibid., p. 722.

[3] Ibid., p. xvii (intro.).

like a kind of auditory palindrome with a visual symbol tacked on the end of it.[1] The "K" may be constructed as a line with two other lines converging upon it but not crossing it. The "tross" of "Albatross" is almost a cross but not quite. In a visual sense the "T" is like the cross of Christ, but in an auditory sense it is different. The theme of "The Ancient Mariner" is concerned with the crossing of a line, as it is stated in the "Argument" preceding the poem:

> How a ship having passed the line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

In another sense, "Kubla Khan" is also concerned with the crossing of a line. The vision of the dome with the caves of ice was constructed "midway on the waves." The dreamer, in the second part of the poem, desires to cross this midpoint by building the same vision "in air." Crossing a midpoint could have been an important symbol for a poet who was interested in the reconciliation of opposites.

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[1]Beer, p. 210. Coleridge's punning talk was mentioned in Carlyon's Early Years and Late Reflections, I, 94-5: "In order to illustrate, as was supposed, the inscrutable nature of the Deity, His name 'Abba' was bandied through all its changes, as, for instance, Ab--BA----AB--BA--backwards and forwards--forwards and backwards AB--BA." Beer connects this anecdote with Coleridge's interest in symbolizing the union of the lost Shechinah. It is suggested, however, that it also demonstrates the kind of procedure which may have been involved in the selection of the two images, "Kubla Khan" and the "Albatross."

The suggestion that sounds extended to visual symbols that had meaning in the poems is not so far-fetched in view of the fact that Coleridge often employed obscure symbols in his notebooks. He appeared to assign to them meanings which were arbitrary, but he used them interchangeably with words.[1]

In summary, the poem "Kubla Khan" demonstrates a process in which the diffusion of sound plays an important role. The extension of the effects of the sound imagery usually carries with it emotional overtones since sound images are often linked with feelings or emotions. Peripheral meanings are suggested by components of sound. The sound images are also related organically to the theme and structure of the poem. Much of the theme of the poem appears to have been derived from Jacob Boehme's obscure theory of sound, and some of its images gain meaning from association with those used by Boehme in several of his writings.

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[1]Coburn II, 2383 21½.2.

CHAPTER III

SOME SUGGESTIONS OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOUND IMAGERY AND THEME IN "THE ANCIENT MARINER"

The sound imagery of "The Ancient Mariner" is unusually diffuse and difficult to explain unless it is related to the organic structure of the poem as a whole. Like "Kubla Khan," the poem demonstrates strange relationships between sound and vision. The meaning of such abstruse occurrences as the flying of sounds to the sun can be related to Coleridge's old interest in the transmutation of sound and vision.[1] But even more meaningful is the suggestion that Coleridge used the figure of the Albatross as a symbol of sound. Worked out in the killing of the Albatross, the subsequent deprivation of the ability to speak, and the restoration of speech in the form of penance is a theme which again demonstrates an organic process. This process appears to be related directly to Coleridge's definition of the imagination. Significantly, it suggests the important role of the diffusion of sound in a process

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[1] Roberta Florence Brinkley, ed., Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century, intro. by Louis I. Bredvold (Duke University Press, 1955), p. 175. Coleridge, in commenting on Donne's sermons, expressed his antipathy to belief in irrational connections of sensory elements, unless they could be explained by admitting that there is a transmutation of the "sensible Elements." A "thing," he said, could not be separated from the "sensible accidents" which constitute it.

of perceiving new distinctions.

The theme of transmutation of sound and vision is suggested by the location of the action of "The Ancient Mariner." As in "Kubla Khan," importance is attached to a midpoint; the poetic vision occurs "midway on the waves." A key problem in "The Ancient Mariner" is the crossing of a line. In any act of transmutation, there must be a point at which some quality or component crosses over to the other; There must be a line at which the merging takes place. The passing of the "Line" is part of the mode expressed by the "Argument," which precedes the poem. There is concern for how the ship returns to the "tropical Latitude," and for how the passing of the latitude into the Ancient Mariner's "own Country" is effected. The other part of the reasons stated for the poem is to tell "of the strange things that befell." Transmutation is indeed a strange theme for a poem, but Coleridge hints that he will tell how it is effected.

The suggestion that transmutation of sound is a thematic concern of the poem is strengthened by the Latin preface to the poem, in which the number of "invisible beings" in the universe is believed to exceed the visible. The preface also advances the question of their nature, rank, kinship, and distinguishing marks and graces. The process of their actions is that which interests the human mind, although the knowledge of the process has never been

attained.[1] So says the motto chosen by Coleridge to introduce the poem. Invisible beings, sensibly interpreted, can be sounds, and an exploration of sound imagery in "The Ancient Mariner" suggests that many of the supernatural beings can be sensibly explained by attributing their natures to sounds.

Many indications point to an interpretation of the Albatross as the power of producing sound. In the previous chapter, it was suggested that the sound produced by the word "albatross" can be heard as a kind of auditory palindrome of "Kubla Khan." The affinity of the sounds "K" and "tross" to the word "cross" suggests an auditory relationship of some kind. As visual symbols, however, both the "K" and the "t" can represent two important thematic pictures for the poem. The "K" written as a line with two convergent lines meeting at its mid-point suggests the theme of crossing the line. It was suggested that this theme applies both to "Kubla Khan" and to "The Ancient Mariner." The "T" bears an unmistakable resemblance to the cross, which in turn suggests the weapon used to kill the albatross. Thus, the auditory palindrome, if planned as such by Coleridge, can be linked thematically to both poems in a

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[1] Earl Leslie Griggs, ed., The Best of Coleridge (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1934), p. 688.

visual as well as an auditory way. If the two poems are linked, there is a further relationship between Kubla Khan and the Albatross in their mutual identity as powers. Kubla Khan was the power behind the decree that resulted in the construction of the pleasure dome. The Albatross was a power of a prophetic kind. As the prose narrative tells us, it was a "pious bird of good omen." Like the prophetic "Ancestral voices" in "Kubla Khan," however, its destruction portended conflict. Much of the conflict in "The Ancient Mariner" revolved around the problem of producing sound, after the bird was killed by the mariner. The drought which descended affected the speech of the mariner and his crew:

> And every tongue, through utter drought,
> Was withered at the root;
> We could not speak, nor more than if
> We had been choked with soot.

And later:

> With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
> We could nor laugh nor wail;
> Through utter drought all dumb we stood!

With the death of the Albatross, the power to produce sounds was also destroyed.

Another indication that the Albatross is allied with the power to produce sounds is the location of its origin. Like the ice caves in "Kubla Khan," the cave-like surroundings where the bird first made its appearance were unknown except by their sound. The men could not "ken" the "shapes of men nor beasts," but they could hear what the prose

narrator called "the land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen." And the poetic verification echoed:

> The ice was here, the ice was there,
> The ice was all around:
> It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
> Like noises in a swound!

Thus, the location where the Albatross came out of the "fog," to split the ice with a "thunder-fit," was predominantly characterized by a deluge of sound.

Therefore, in view of the evidence supporting the alliance of the Albatross with a context predominantly made up of sounds, it seems logical to assume that the mysterious bird itself possesses some kind of relationship with the production of those sounds. If Coleridge intended the obvious auditory resemblance pointed out by the writer between the sounds in the images of Kubla Khan and the Albatross, then there is concrete evidence that the visual image of the bird derives from a literal transmutation of sound.

The foregoing evidence, merely speculatory by itself, gains credibility by the development of the action in "The Ancient Mariner." The transmutation of the despised slimy creatures of the deep into the water-snakes of the mariner's salvation is effected through the mariner's love for an action which is strangely similar to the behavior of sound.

The first account of the inhabitants of the sea is related with repugnance by the mariner in his account:

> The very deep did rot: O Christ!
> That ever this should be!
> Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
> Upon the slimy sea.

And when the men died, the mariner in despair associated himself with the hated creatures.

> The many men, so beautiful!
> And they all dead did lie:
> And a thousand thousand slimy things
> Lived on; and so did I.

But when the water-snakes appeared, they were substantially the same as the slimy creatures. The prose narrator establishes their similarity by his referral both to the "slimy things" and to the "water-snakes" as "creatures" of the "calm." The water-snakes, seen in the light of the moon, manifested curious signs of behavior suggesting the action of sound waves: "They coiled and swam;/" Coleridge associated the path of sound with serpentine motion probably from the suggestion of Egyptian mythological symbolism connecting the two. He compared the activity of pleasurable reading to "the motion of a serpent, which the Egyptians made the emblem of intellectual power; or like the path of sound through the air . . . ."[1] The coiling and swimming

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[1]Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. by George Watson (New York: Dutton, Reprint, 1962), p. 173.

of the water-snakes simultaneously is highly suggestive of the pattern of sound-waves. The ability of sound to stimulate the emotions, previously suggested and pointed out in reference to the "woman wailing for her demon-lover" in "Kubla Khan," is exemplified in the subsequent restoration of the mariner's release from the "spell." Through the combination of sound and vision in the "blue, glossy green, and velvet black water-snakes," the mariner is once more able to pray because of the "spring of love" gushing from his heart. Here again is the kind of symbolism Coleridge might have found in Boehme's Lucid Alpha--a symbolism which the writer has suggested may well have been a factor in Coleridge's selection of the name "Alph" for his sacred river in "Kubla Khan." The Lucid Alph was Boehme's term for love, which was the foremost principle and first mover. The term also incorporates light and an alphabetical beginning to suggest the "source of all lights and forms."[1] Thus, from a combination of light and sound origins, Boehme had derived an image denoting love. Through love, the mariner was liberated from the stifling power of the loss of sound; he could pray once more. The dead Albatross "fell off, and sank/ Like lead into the sea."

Not only the resurrection of the mariner's ability

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[1]Jacob Boehme, Dialogues on the Supersensual Life, p. 44.

to produce sounds but the transmutation of the souls of the crew suggests the power of sound to stimulate both love and vision. The first indication of life in the dead bodies of the ship's crew occurred with the resurrection of their breath. The point is doubly emphasized, first by the prose narrator and then by the mariner's account. According to the prose accompaniment, "The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired [inspirited] and the ship moves on;" the mariner noted:

> Beneath the lightning and the Moon
> The dead men gave a groan.
>
> They groaned, they stirred, they all up-rose,
> Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;

The sounds of the corpses, however, do not derive from the souls of the men; their life force is not associated with the curse they had directed at the mariner but with a "troop of spirits blest." They were sent by an act of love, as the prose narrator tells us. They were "sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint." The transmutation of the souls into spirits with powers of producing sound is established by their ability to project the sounds and to diffuse them with the sun. The diffusion of the sun was a favorite point with Boehme.[1] Light and sound participated freely in

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[1] Jacob Boehme, The Aurora, trans. by John Sparrow, ed. by C. J. Barker and D. S. Hehner (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1960), p. 458.

the transmutation of Coleridge's spirits:

> Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
> Then darted to the Sun;
> Slowly the sounds came back again,
> Now mixed, now one by one.

The diffusion or mixing of the sounds is aided by the diffusion of light with the result that sounds are linked with visual images. Sometimes it is the "sky-lark" singing; sometimes it is "all little birds that are." At other times the process travels from diffusion to distinction:

> And now 'twas like all instruments,
> Now like a lonely flute;

And still other instances find the process reconciling opposites, with "an angel's song" making the "heavens be mute."

The power of sound to stimulate love is demonstrated in the aid extended to the mariner by the "lonesome Spirit from the south-pole," who, though still requiring the mariner to do penance, carried the ship to the line, "in obedience to the angelic troop." The angelic troop, empowered by diffusing sound, had permeated the will of the spirit. The daemonic nature of the spirit is established by the prose narrative, who speaks of the "Polar Spirit's fellow-daemons, the invisible inhabitants of the element." As the daemon who "loved the bird that loved the man/ Who shot him with his bow," he dimly re-echoes the demon-lover of "Kubla Khan." His voice, "as soft as honey-dew," has a familiar ring with the line from "Kubla Khan": "For he on honey-dew hath fed/"

If the meaning is intentionally diffused, it suggests the same sort of guilt implied in the dreamer who yearned to build the vision of the "sunny dome" with "caves of ice" out of a lust for sound. Coleridge had associated lust with shooting at a hawk and had noted an incident illustrating it in a notebook some years after he had written "The Ancient Mariner." In 1804, he had written:

> Hawk with ruffled Feathers resting on the Bow-sprit--
> Now shot at & yet did not move--how fatigued--a third
> time it made a gyre, a short circuit, & returned again/
> 5 times it was thus shot at/ left the Vessel/ flew to
> another/ & I heard firing, now here, now there/ &
> nobody shot it/ but probably it perished from fatigue,
> & the attempt to rest upon the wave!--Poor Hawk! O
> Strange Lust of Murder in Man!--It is not cruelty/ it
> is mere non-feeling from non-thinking.[1]

The connection of lust with the killing of the Albatross in "The Ancient Mariner" presents the other side or the opposite condition of the love which prompted the mariner to bless the water-snakes. The same sort of duality was suggested in "Kubla Khan" in the image of the woman wailing for her demon-lover. Whether the love was good or evil--whether it presaged a condition of blessedness or lust--was undetermined. The suggestion that both elements were present somehow clings to the image. The acknowledgment that good and evil prevail in all situations was, as has been pointed out, one of the consequences of Boehme's thinking.[2] The relationship

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[1] Coburn II, 2090 15.56. [2] See Aurora, p. 51.

of the use of sound in stimulating lust that results in man's alienation from God was another consequence of the duality with which sound could diffuse itself.[1] The duality of love and lust, as two qualities not far separated, is exemplified in the image of the Polar demon and his propelling of the mariner's ship to the Line.

> Under the keel nine fathom deep,
> From the land of mist and snow,
> The spirit slid: and it was he
> That made the ship to go.

The connection between the power of the spirit and the power of sound is demonstrated by the "tune" which the ship makes when it is moving, and the statement that, even though the sounds darting to the sun had ceased their music, the power of sound continued to accompany the moving of the ship:

> It ceased; yet still the sails made on
> A pleasant noise till noon,
> A noise like of a hidden brook
> In the leafy month of June,
> That to the sleeping woods all night
> Singeth a quiet tune.

When the ship stopped, however, because the "lonesome spirit" from the south-pole could not pass beyond the Line, the sound also stopped.

> The sails at noon left off their tune,
> And the ship stood still also.

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[1]See The Way to Christ, pp. 140-141.

The daemonic powers of sound are relinquished in Part VI of the poem, and the joys generated by the cheer of the Pilot renew the mariner's courage. In the interim the mariner, though moving by a supernatural motion, experiences the despotism of vision without sound.[1] Even the ocean is

> 'Still as a slave before his lord,
> The ocean hath no blast;
> His great bright eye most silently
> Up to the Moon is cast--

"When the Mariner's trance is abated," he remains under the spell of the dead men's eyes.

> All stood together on the deck,
> For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
> All fixed on me their stony eyes,
> That in the Moon did glitter.

Under the despotism of the curse, the mariner's eyes were riveted to those of the corpses. Again, the power of sound was denied to him; he could not pray. Released from this tyranny, he is moved by a fear, which assumes the shape of "a frightful fiend," closing behind his tread. The ship now sails with a new kind of wind,

> But soon there breathed a wind on me,
> Nor sound nor motion made:

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[1] Biographia Literaria, p. 62. Also see marginalia, Brinkley, 403. The latter, substantially the same as entry in Biographia Literaria, is annexed to Southey's attack on Newton's theory of ether and its subsequent reliance on a mechanistic philosophy. The difficulty Coleridge noted was that effects not visible to the eye were bewildering to the system which depended solely on the eye for its explanation of cause.

Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

But at last the mariner sees the vision of the lighthouse, the hill and the kirk, and he knows that he is back in his own country.

The sixth part of "The Ancient Mariner" thus bears a striking resemblance to the second part of "Kubla Khan," which Coleridge had attributed to the nightmare of disease and pain, because it is similar in structure. Just as the Abyssinian maid with her dulcimer was seen only in a vision bereft of her symphony and song, so is the movement of the ship seen only in visual terms.[1] The absence of sound is conspicuous because of its emphasis in preceding parts. The mariner is able to pray, however, and he prays to be awake. The waking he craves apparently does not include the experience of hearing. Although he welcomes the light signals of the "seraph-band" that appears on the dead bodies, he rejoices that they make no sound.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart--
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

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[1] Coburn I, 354 3½.5. While he was learning the German language, Coleridge listed words in his notebooks, dividing them into categories including "Sight & Motion," and "Sound & Motion." This is an instance of a penchant he had for differentiating motion according to the sense by which it was activated.

Like the "angel's song/ That makes the heavens be mute/" there is the suggestion that sound has been altered and assimilated in the heavenly vision of the light-giving seraphs.[1] Thus, although the structure of the sixth part places visual emphasis at the beginning, it suggests the value of sound linked with vision by transmutation.

The sound made by the approaching "Pilot and the Pilot's boy" generates a "joy the dead men could not blast." And the mariner recognizes the ability of the hermit to produce sounds. The hermit "singeth loud his godly hymns/ That he makes in the wood." The rearing of the water-snakes in "tracks of shining white," which suggested the path of sound, is somehow akin to the raising of the Hermit's voice in love.

> How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
> He loves to talk with marineres
> That come from a far countree.

The image of the hermit also generates joy and love, and it is implied that his voice is his source of power.

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[1]Beer, p. 127. Coleridge had read passages from Maurice's Hindostan, demonstrating the twofold nature of seraphs. They could be either good or evil. The Hebrew word s'r'ph was construed either as a serpent or as an angelic being. Coleridge's interpretation, if in accord with the writer's view that the image of the seraph denoted both heavenly light and sound in one form, would maintain that the element of sound possessed a peculiar potential for initiating the transformation of the angelic into the daemonic. Thus, the silence of the seraphs on the bodies was music to the mariner's ear.

Boehme's theory that Mercurius or sound is enkindled in the transmission of sin may have affected Coleridge's many speculations on the nature of sin and guilt.[1] As an instigator of love and lust, the diffusion of sounds could have incurred guilt. Thus, when the Hermit replied to the mariner's plea to "shrieve" him, he stimulated the mariner's guilt by saying:

> 'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say--
> What manner of man art thou?'

To produce sounds linked with a visual judgment of himself as a creature of lust, therefore, would arouse overwhelming guilt feelings in the mariner.

> Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
> With a woful [sic] agony,
> Which forced me to begin my tale;
> And then it left me free.

Coleridge also was aware of the paradoxical quality of sound. He knew that producing sounds could both arouse and expiate guilt. An example of the former is inherent in his observation that guilt is incurred more by what one utters with his tongue than by what he consents to visualize. In recalling a transcription he had made of a play considered sacrilegious, he admitted:

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[1]Coburn I, 1770 16.156. Coleridge, for instance, speculated that moral evil originated from the "streamy Nature of Association" and saw the "bad passions" of dreams as an illustration of this.

> Unaffectedly I declare I feel pain at repetitions like these, however innocent. As historical documents they are valuable; but I am sensible that what I can read with my eye with perfect innocence, I cannot without inward fear and misgivings pronounce with my tongue.[1]

And surely the expiation of guilt by sound is hinted in the following lines Coleridge penned in the Gutch notebook.

> And cauldrons the scoop'd earth a boiling sea!
> Rush on my ear, a cataract of sound,
> The guilty pomp consuming while it flares-- [2]

These two attitudes toward the saying "what manner" of man he is govern the mariner's emotions and are imbedded in the endless procession of anguish and relief which the mariner is forced to undergo. The agony of pronouncing with his tongue what he sees himself to be is expiated by the guilty pomp which consumes while it flares.

An example of the guilty pomp in which the mariner indulges himself is the ironic bit of wisdom advanced by the mariner despite his obvious failure to love either bird or man. First, he boasts:

> O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
> Alone on a wide wide sea:
> So lonely 'twas, that God himself
> Scarce seemed there to be

And then he speaks of experience totally alien to any that

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[1] S. T. Coleridge, Coleridge's Essays & Lectures on Shakespeare & Some Other Old Poets & Dramatists (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Reprint 1914), p. 23.

[2] Coburn I, 134 G. 129.

he has related in his tale.

> O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
> 'Tis sweeter far to me,
> To walk together to the kirk
> With a goodly company!
>
> To walk together to the kirk,
> And all together pray,
> While each to his great Father bends,
> Old men, and babes, and loving friends
> And youths and maidens gay!

This bit of irony does not escape the prose narrator, who concludes, "And to teach by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth." The height of pomposity is perhaps reached in the lines:

> Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
> To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
> He prayeth well, who loveth well
> Both man and bird and beast.

Relief from pomposity is attained by dissipating the sounds which remind the mariner of his lustful killing of the Albatross, but the relief is only temporary. The diffusion of sound is permeative. Like a pungent odor it will return to remind the mariner of the distinction between one who would kill the Albatross and one who loves "both man and bird and beast." As Boehme put it, through the Mercurius [or power of sound] the "Holy Ghost goeth forth from the Father and Son, and helpeth to form, image, or frame . . . ."[1] The tone or speech helps to "co-image and frame or form all."[2]

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[1] Boehme, The Aurora, p. 341. [2] Ibid., p. 342.

Although sounds diffuse and dissipate, they are also at work forming associations which aid the intellect in perceiving distinctions. And for this reason, the mariner's tale is both an expiation and a renewal of his guilt.

The marginal gloss or prose narration, which Coleridge added to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads in 1800,[1] appears to function at least in part as a diffusing and distinguishing device. The effect of hearing the tale told twice in slightly different forms expands the awareness of the time in which the poem maneuvers. As in "Kubla Khan," through the ancestral voices, a surplus of sounds is used to extend a temporal zone. The prose narration accomplishes what the ancestral voices accomplished; it doubly emphasizes the timelessness of the mariner's dilemma, first in the present tense used by the prose narrator and then in the past tense used by the mariner in relating his tale. It also aids in the perception that the repetition of the mariner's tale is a periodical but perpetual recurrence. The simultaneity of the prose and poetic accounts reconciles the past with the present and fuses them together. Coleridge's intention to obliterate time may have been related to Boehme's belief that whenever the fierceness of wrath "overcometh the opposition of love in this world, then the

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[1] Poetical Works, pp. 512-520.

fire kindleth itself, and then there is no more time in this world."[1] It was evidently the struggle between opposing forces that resulted in the awareness of time. Coleridge's prose device, thus, both delineates and destroys the distinction of time.

Certain images in "The Ancient Mariner" may have been derived with images of Boehme's in mind. The spectre-woman "Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH," suggests the "dead or mortal mother" of Boehme. Born from her earthly seed, man is constantly in danger of her temptation. According to Boehme, he "reached back from the love into the wrath, and lusted after his dead or mortal mother to eat of her, and to suck her breast, and to stand upon her stock."[2] The fruits of the earth are comprehensible, palpable, hard, evil, wrathful, poisonous, venomous, half-dead kind; for as the mother was, so were her children."[3] The sucking of his own blood to restore his power of speech suggests that the mariner also had a taste for the fruits of the body that were imaged by Boehme in the lust of man for the earth mother. The union of the mariner with the spectre-woman, assured by her winning him at dice with the devil, also demonstrates an unholy alliance. The results of the alliance, however, point to

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[1] Boehme, The Aurora, p. 390.

[2] Ibid., p. 553.

[3] Ibid., p. 551.

another teaching of Boehme.

The womb of the earth, according to Boehme, contained not only the twofold nature comprehended by the eye but was itself an emanation from three eternal principles.[1] The twofold quality, out of which good and evil arose, was that which was seen in the alliance with the earth mother. Out of the lust for the mother originated a perpetual war with the devil, who struggled with man to "banish him out of his own country," where he would become a "child of wrath."[2] In the centre of the conflict, however, was a principle of power out of which all things could be renovated as in paradise.[3] Therefore, although the spectre-woman disappears almost as soon as she materializes, she is important for two reasons. She initiates a struggle within the soul of the mariner, and she makes it possible for the threefold nature of love, the power of hearing, and the light of vision to manifest itself as one. She predicts the threefold union by whistling thrice. Her signal for departure is the setting of the sun, which happens immediately or, as the prose narrator tells us, with "no twilight within the courts of the Sun."

The nature of the struggle shows another link with Boehme. Fear entered the mariner's heart at the rising of

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[1] Ibid., p. 553. [2] Ibid., p. 554.

[3] Ibid., pp. 554-555.

the moon. His "life-blood seemed to sip!" The "horned Moon" suggests its ability to reflect a devil figure. Boehme said that the moon was the goddess of the palpable birth (or the earthly birth). The "orb" or "circuit" between the earth and the moon was the house of the devil, and it was here that the struggle or war must take place.[1] And in the poem, the mariner struggled for seven days and seven nights under the curse of the dead men's eyes!

> An orphan's curse would drag to hell
> A spirit from on high;
> But oh! more horrible than that
> Is the curse in a dead man's eye!

The mariner's yearning towards the journeying Moon, in the light of Boehme's theorizing, signifies the spell that the spectre-woman has placed upon the mariner by winning his soul. Boehme's belief that love could triumph as the three principles asserted themselves out of the twofold nature is illustrated in the mariner's transformation by love for the water-snakes. They are no longer slimy creatures repugnant to him. Their "track" is a "flash of golden fire." The same track, caused by a coiling and swimming, suggests the path of sound. Vision, sound, and love are three powers united in one. It is further significant that the mariner sees them by the light of the moon, suggesting Boehme's

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[1] Ibid., p. 530.

moon goddess of the earthly birth. The connection also helps to clarify the wailing of the woman for her demon-lover beneath the light of the waning moon; the temptation of lust with its daemonic impulse certainly belongs to the imagery.

The release of the mariner from the burden of the Albatross placed as a cross around his neck demonstrates Boehme's belief that the struggle with wrath, responsible for the sore pressing of the "love-cross," can be mitigated by those who act with "love, meekness and industrious earnest yearning, and kindlings of love with their prayers."[1] The yearning of the mariner towards the moon, his meek blessing of the water-snakes, and his prayer all point to this link with Boehme. The imagery of the "love-cross," if used by Coleridge, corresponds with the suggestion that the Albatross was murdered out of a lust for the power of sound. The imagery is so similar that one cannot help suspecting a direct link.

The darting of the sounds to the sun, which follows the blessing of the water-snakes, has already been explained as a reconciliation or diffusion of sound with vision. Viewed as a direct consequence of the awakening of love in the mariner, it also suggests the threefold unity. That the episode may have symbolized for Coleridge the day-spring of

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[1] Ibid., p. 390.

the soul, the AURORA itself, is hinted in several images which can be traced to Boehme. The title Aurora meant "The Dawning of the Day in the East, or Morning Redness in the rising of the SUN,"[1] in which even the most simple man should be able to see "the being of God."[2] The rising of the sun after the killing of the Albatross and before the blessing of the water-snakes is specifically not the Aurora.

> Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
> The glorious Sun uprist:

The Aurora, according to Boehme, was heralded by a flag and a rainbow.

> Though this great work in man hath remained hidden till this very day, yet God be praised, it will now once be day, for the day-spring or morning-redness breaketh forth. The breaker-through, or opener of the innermost birth, sheweth and presenteth itself with its red, green and white flag, in the outermost birth upon the rainbow.[3]

Though the threefold principles were at work, the day-spring could be seen with the eyes only in its twofold nature. Thus, it is logical that before it "dawned,"

> The upper air burst into life!
> And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
> To and fro they were hurried about!

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[1] Ibid., p. 31.

[2] Ibid., p. 582.

[3] Ibid., p. 509.

In the midst of a hard rain, the moon was conspicuously at hand for any lunar rainbow that might have occurred.

> And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
> The Moon was at its edge.
>
> The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
> The Moon was at its side:

Coleridge, who thought that "the best and most forcible sense of a word is often that which is contained in its Etymology,"[1] would have known the Middle English flaght, which denoted a flash. The fire-flags in "The Ancient Mariner" suggest the fire-flash, which was an important image with Boehme. Sound originated in the fire-flash at the same time that light was generated:

> But the tone of voice riseth up in the middle centre, in the flash or lightning, where the light is generated out of the heat, where the flash or lightning of life riseth up.[2]

The process of uniting sound and light in the fire-flash, according to Boehme, entailed "trembling and terror." If Coleridge had this in mind, the groaning and rising up of the dead men are appropriate. The terror of the dead men signifies that the threefold process is twofold at the same time. In addition to the generation of the divine or good,[3] there is the judgment which is the enmity of love,[4] in which

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[1] Brinkley, p. 533.

[2] Ibid., p. 209.

[3] Ibid., p. 228.

[4] Ibid., p. 233.

the sound is a "mere beating, rumbling, or cracking."[1] Thus, the groaning of the dead men belongs to that which is evil; the sounds of the spirits in their journey to the sun are metamorphosed into birds and instruments, generating good because they were sent through the love of the guardian saint.

The framework of the wedding-feast emphasizes the theme of union, which predominates through the crossing of the line which seeks to unite the world of sounds and visions or judgments. It is in his home country where the mariner must be judged, the land of the lighthouse and the kirk. And it is in his own country where he tells his story to be judged by the Wedding-Guest. As far as the judgment is concerned, there is visual evidence that the Albatross was murdered out of a lust for the power of sound. By his own admission, the mariner has gained a strange power of speech as a consequence of his action.

> I pass, like night, from land to land;
> I have strange power of speech;
> That moment that his face I see
> I know the man that must hear me:

His power enables him to detain the Wedding-Guest from the feasting. It even prevents the Wedding-Guest from attending at all; he turned from the bridegroom's door, and

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[1] Ibid., pp. 233-234.

> He went like one that hath been stunned,
> And is of sense forlorn:
> A sadder and a wiser man,
> He rose the morrow morn.

His judgment resulting from the twofold distinction[1] enables him to see the irony of the mariner's protestation of love for all creatures in the light of his cruel disregard of the Albatross. But the experience divulged by the mariner in his transformation reveals to him the deep anguish to be suffered by those who would attain the threefold union. Perhaps Boehme expressed the inevitability of anguish in his Dialogue of Two Souls, with the question:

> Why ruin yourself in anguish? Why torment yourself with your own abilities and will--you who are but a worm? Through this your torment only increases! Even if you plunged to the bottom of the sea, even if you flew to the morning-red and soared beyond the stars, you could not get rid of it. For the more anxious you are, the greater and more painful your nature will be; yet you will not find rest.[2]

The answer he gave, consistent with the philosophy of Boehme, may shed light on the Wedding-Guest's decision to forsake the rejoicing at the wedding.

The rest of the quotation can apply to the dreamer in the second part of "Kubla Khan," who dreams of the "milk" and "honey-dew" of Paradise.

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[1] Jacob Boehme, The Way to Christ, p. 163. Boehme, acknowledging the need for dialectic, said that a comprehension of contraries is necessary to motivate activity and promote sensitivity.

[2] Ibid., p. 148.

> To your self-seeking all is lost just as a seared twig cannot revive itself by its own will and flourish with other vegetation. You cannot come to God by your own abilities; you cannot change yourself into the angelical form which you originally possessed.[1]

Boehme states his alternative, ". . . the sly eyes of egotistic love must be closed and humiliated so that no creature which can lead you to imaginative speculation can live within you."[2]

Thus, it seems that if Coleridge were as deeply influenced by Boehme as is indicated by the present study, he might very well have consciously developed an organic structure which corresponded with the basic tenets of Boehme's philosophy. In both "Kubla Khan" and "The Ancient Mariner," the structure mirrors a process which demonstrates a pattern of diffusing sound in accordance with logical distinctions. Both poems show a striking use of sound imagery developed in connection with passion or anguish.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 148-149.

[2] Ibid., p. 151.

CHAPTER IV

AN EXAMINATION OF THEME AND IMAGERY IN "CHRISTABEL"

The mystery of "Christabel," perhaps the least comprehensible of Coleridge's three most famous poems, is heightened by its seemingly fragmentary form. The poem appears to leave unresolved the complexities of the relationship between the main figures Christabel and Geraldine. The origins of its imagery generally remain an enigma.[1] In the writer's opinion, there are some indications that Coleridge was concerned with an attempt to materialize a theory which involved sound imagery as a dynamic part of the creative process. In doing so, he utilized some of the insights of Jacob Boehme.

Although it appears intricate and insinuative like the serpent that lurks behind the image of Geraldine,[2]

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[1] John Livingston Lowes, The Road to Xanadu (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930), p. 4n. "Christabel" was not included in Lowes' volume on imagery in "Kubla Khan" and "The Ancient Mariner," because, as the author said, "Wherever the mysterious tracts from which it rose may lie, they are off the road which leads to 'The Ancient Mariner' and 'Kubla Khan.' And we are following only where known facts lead. I wish I did know in what distant deeps or skies the secret lurks; but the elusive clue is yet to capture."

[2] The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. James Dykes Campbell (Chicago: The Macmillan Company, rep. 1925), p. 604. Coleridge's apparent last comment in 1833 on his not finishing what he had said he would do with "Christabel" was that he was afraid that he "could not carry on with equal success the execution of the idea, an extremely subtle and difficult one."

the shape of a process devolving from the union of visual and auditory components can be traced in "Christabel" as it was in "Kubla Khan" and "The Ancient Mariner." Diffusion of sound is important in the poem, especially in the atmospheric effects of the animal sounds merged with the tolling of clock and later tolling of bells, but it is in the latent "exponents of sound" within the poem that the process of fusion is explicated. The main exponent of sound appears to be the figure of Christabel.

Christabel exemplifies the power of sound in several ways which add to her complexity. At the outset of the poem, Christabel displays an extraordinary auditory power to protect herself through prayer. She is safe in the forest under the protection of Jesu and Maria in contrast to Geraldine, who is held in bondage underneath the same broad-breasted oak tree under which Christabel kneels in prayer. Christabel's powers are those of extension; her prayers move through space and time to work for the "weal of her lover that's far away." And the recognition of the effectiveness of her prayers is implicit in her thanks to the divine Virgin for protection.

> And Christabel devoutly cried
> To the lady by her side,
> Praise we the Virgin all divine
> Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!

Christabel's strangest auditory display, however, is undoubtedly her act of hissing. The first occurrence

corresponds with her witness of Geraldine's embrace by Sir Leoline, her father. But it happens again after the disclosure of Bracy's dream and the subsequent vow by Sir Leoline to "crush the snake." In both cases the inward terror accompanying the hissing dissipates and transforms to a state of inward bliss. At the same time, Coleridge seemed intent on making the hissing and its consequences part of an unconscious process.[1] Christabel passively imitated the "look of dull and treacherous hate/" with forced unconscious sympathy/ . . . ." Just as evidenced in the anecdote concerning the idiot and his clock, the process involved appears to be one of diffusion of sound without accompanying distinction. For Christabel, the linking of the snake sound with the visible snake imitation was a non-rational one because her orientation appeared to be primarily auditory rather than visual. Nevertheless, the spiritual state of Christabel as seen in her experience, first, is characterized by a "vision blest" and, secondly, by the act of "inly" praying. Thus, there are indications that the theme is a

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[1] J. B. Beer, Coleridge the Visionary (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959), pp. 194-196. Beer poses the problem of the inconsistency of Christabel's innocence with her recognition of evil implicit in her intention to redeem it. Beer thinks that because Coleridge had moral scruples, he "was reduced to the task of making it [the reconciliation] take place, by some means, in her unconscious." He finds it "difficult to see how he could have solved the problem posed by this demand."

further treatment of the reconciliation of qualities usually perceived in distinction by the visual and auditory senses.[1]

The theme, the writer suggests, is borne out further in the relationship between Christabel and Geraldine. The effect of Christabel on Geraldine is a kind of metamorphosis.[2] Until Geraldine establishes a relationship with Christabel, she is conspicuously weak in ability to produce sounds. She makes a point of the weakness which is at first reflected in her speech.

> The lady strange made answer meet,
> And her voice was faint and sweet:--
> Have pity on my sore distress,
> I scarce can speak for weariness:

And when Christabel implores her to pray to the Virgin in gratitude for deliverance, Geraldine retorts,

> Alas, alas! said Geraldine,
> I cannot speak for weariness.

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[1] S. T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. George Watson (New York Dutton, Reprint, 1962), p. 174. The imagination, thought Coleridge, "reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities . . . ."

[2] Coburn II, 2354 21.538. Coleridge was conscious of the role of sound in the evolution of meaning. Noting the words "hat, hut, hus, haus, house," he observed, "My Hat my Head's House." Here is development of meaning, but sound is the bridge which effects the change. Cf. Coburn I, 41.5. He also knew that sound was linked with tactual imitation. In 1794, he had noted that the word "smile" perhaps originated from the word "subrisis" since both "b" and "m" were labials. He was recognizing that the physical action in producing phonemes was important in evolving meaning too.

In view of the indications that Geraldine seems to be lacking in the kind of auditory power with which Christabel appears richly endowed, Geraldine's attempt to curtail or gain mastery over Christabel's speech powers is rendered more intelligible. Once inside Christabel's room, Geraldine assumes a new voice and a new air of command.

> But soon with altered voice, said she--
> Though thou her guardian spirit be,
> Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me.

And thus dispensing with the spirit of Christabel's mother, Geraldine exposes her bosom to work the spell that makes her

> . . . lord of thy utterance, Christabel!

A further demonstration of the result of the spell is the exercise of control over Christabel's ability to voice the truth.

> But vainly thou warrest,
> For this is alone in
> Thy power to declare,
> That in the dim forest
> Thou heard'st a low moaning,
> And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;
> And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
> To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.

Significantly, the freedom to speak is limited to utterances of Christabel's love and compassion for Geraldine. It appears to the writer that the hint of lust in the relationship between Christabel and Geraldine is not substantiated by any internal evidence in the poem other than Geraldine's passion for Christabel on the basis of her value as an exponent of sound. Christabel's innocence and purity seem well

established. Nevertheless, Geraldine exhibits a kind of lust which, in the writer's opinion, is not unlike that which characterized the wanton killing of the Albatross and distinguished the yearning of the dreamer in the second part of "Kubla Khan."

Christabel, on the other hand, is not a knowing partner in Geraldine's sin. In the morning she rose and prayed

> That He, who on the cross did groan,
> Might wash away her sins unknown,

and there is no indication in the poem that Christabel is at any time able to name or structure any sin she may have committed. If Coleridge intended for Christabel to be more dynamically oriented to sound than to vision, her apparent failure to exercise judgment can be explained.

Furthermore, an understanding of the poem is complicated by the question of the involvement of Christabel's mother. The spirit of the dead mother hovers over the poem from beginning to end. On her deathbed she prophesied her own resurrection as far as sounds were concerned. Christabel relates her saying

> That she should hear the castle-bell
> Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.

The mother is also responsible for making the "wine of virtuous powers," which Geraldine drinks just before she becomes aware of the presence of the mother's spirit and

just before she announces her intention to pray for the first time. And the wine apparently precipitates Geraldine's only indication of an inward spiritual vision when she says,

> All they who live in the upper sky,
> Do love you, holy Christabel!

Near the end of the poem, the mother's dependence on the power of prayer shows that she, like Christabel, utilized auditory power.

> She prayed the moment ere she died;
> Prayed that the babe for whom she died,
> Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
> That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
> Sir Leoline!

If, as the writer suggests, the mother also exemplifies the power to produce sounds, Geraldine's slumbering with Christabel, "As a mother with her child/, may indicate that Coleridge intended to reinforce a link of feminine creativity with sound-producing ability.[1] That such a link

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[1]Coleridge's Essays & Lectures on Shakespeare & Some Other Old Poets & Dramatists (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Reprint 1907), p. 77. Coleridge speculated that women were less visual in their thinking than men. "Principles," he observed, "have a lax hold on a woman's heart, when opposed to, or even separated from, passion and inclination." Women were "almost wholly extroitive" by nature. The kind of orientation Coleridge noted in women appears to be more auditory than visual. cf. Coburn II, 2310 31.494. In remarking about the tendency of women for "clinging to & beating about, hanging upon & keeping up & reluctantly letting fall, any doleful or painful or unpleasant subject" in comparison to men of their class, he pondered if there were not a corresponding "want of generalizing power & even instinct." cf. Coburn I, 478 5.20. In a notebook entry in 1799, Coleridge stated a question prefaced by a strange statement, "Religious Slang operates better on Woman than Men/ Why?" No answer was

might produce vision is hinted at in the suggestion that the sleeping Christabel seems to experience a vision as she emerges from her trance.

> And oft the while she seems to smile
> As infants at a sudden light!

The outcome of Geraldine's act of exposing her bosom is a kind of identification of Geraldine with a mother figure.

> And lo! the worker of these harms,
> That holds the maiden in her arms,
> Seems to slumber still and mild,
> As a mother with her child.

Nevertheless, the identification is not a permanent transformation. The insidious nature of Geraldine reasserts itself later in the poem in the image of the snake and in Christabel's ensuing distress. The link between Christabel

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given, but three years later a similar entry appeared in another notebook (see Coburn I, 1240 21.253).

> Religious Slang operates better on Women than on Men. N.B. Why?--I will give over--it is not Tanti!"

At first glance, the sense of the entry is that Coleridge had given up finding an answer because he had found the search not worthwhile. But if Coleridge was deliberately punning on the genitive singular form of the Latin, he may have been humorously suggesting that those affected by stock phrases and expressions are deficient in some sense. Verbal expressions not accorded the judgment of visual power tend to have the auditory and emotional effect only. For a poetic expression of Coleridge's sentiments relating women to auditory thinking see Poetical Works, pp. 167-168, "To Matilda Betham From A Stranger." Coleridge wrote:

> The Almighty, having first composed a Man,
> Set him to music, framing Woman for him,
> And fitted each to each, and made them one!
> And 'til my faith, that there's a natural bond
> Between the female mind and measur'd sounds/

and Geraldine is thus a tenuous one. That Geraldine could not attain the secret of feminine creativity is implicit in the lines Coleridge later deleted from the poem. The sterility of Geraldine is patently avowed in lines which appeared in a MS. copy Coleridge lent to J. Payne Collier:[1]

> Behold her bosom and half her side
> Are lean and old and foul of hue,[2]

and from another MS. copy reportedly seen by a reviewer for the Examiner in 1816, the bosom was described with what was later omitted from the poem,

> Hideous, deformed, and pale of hue.[3]

Geraldine's inability to have any real knowledge of Christabel's auditory power is reflected in the contrast between Christabel's spiritual nature and Geraldine's demonic one. Although she coveted Christabel's power to produce sounds, the vision she attained by temporarily gaining mastery over Christabel was not a transcending glimpse of spiritual truth but an inwardly turned sight of her own demonic energy with attendant guilt. Guilt is inherent in Geraldine's remark

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[1] S. T. Coleridge, The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. with intro. by James Dykes Campbell (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1925), p. 605.

[2] Ibid., p. 606.

[3] Ibid.

to Christabel,

> Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
> This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow/

But without knowledge of the auditory elements, Geraldine's understanding of touch and vision, manifested in her ability to utilize both the sight and touch of her bosom, is marked by a kind of sterile duality.[1] Thus, it seems to the writer that "Christabel" in some degree treats of the same "pain and disease" Coleridge intended to portray in the last stanza of "Kubla Khan."

Coleridge, however, did not depend on the reader to abstract this kind of interpretation of linking and transcending sensory impressions without attempting to reinforce it or make it more concrete with poetic imagery. The abstract explanation of the nature of the union between Christabel and Geraldine can be grounded in Bracy's dream. Two entries appearing together in the Gutch notebook shed light on Coleridge's intentions for the use of the snake and dove imagery in the dream. Both are from Bartram's Travels. One images the union of snake and bird as one living

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[1]Roberta F. Brinkley, Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century (Duke University Press, 1955), p. 118. The spiritual self-centeredness of dual thinking was recognized by Coleridge in his belief that dichotomy, or what he called the "Division of Ground into Contrairies," was the necessary form of reason whenever the human mind pretended to be the center of its own system.

creature; the other describes a "heaving and swelling" process in terms of sound. The connection between the entry and Bracy's dream is not hard to see. In the poet's dream, the snake had entwined itself around the neck of the dove.

> And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
> Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!

A union involving dilation and constriction utilized the motion of breath in producing sounds.

In the Gutch notebook, Coleridge penned the passage concerning the action of a crocodile, which curiously parallels the same process:

> An old champion who is perhaps absolute sovereign of a little Lake or Lagoon (when 50 less than himself are obliged to content themselves with roaring & swelling in little coves round about) darts forth from the reedy coverts all at once on the surface of the water, in a right line; at first, seemingly as rapid as lightning, but gradually more slowly until he arrives at the center of the lake, where he stops; he now swells himself by drawing in wind & water thro' his mouth, which causes a loud sonorous rattling in the throat for near a minute; but it is immediately forced out again thro' his mouth & nostrils with a loud noise brandishing his tail in the air, & the vapor ascending from his nostrils like smoke.[1]

Here is a process of dilation and constriction, manifested in swelling and heaving. It produces sound, and it takes place at a center point. The amazing auditory display is

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[1]Kathleen Coburn, ed., The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, I, 221 6.217. (First number indicates entry numbers, which are listed numerically rather than by page.) cf. Lowes, pp. 9-10.

designed to attract the female crocodile.

> At other times when swollen to an extent ready to burst, his head & tail lifted up, he twirls round on the surface of the water. He retires--& others, who dare, continue the exhibition--all to gain the attention of the favorite Female--
> The distant thunder sounds heavily--the crocodiles answer it like an echo--[1]

The absence of crocodiles from the poetry of Coleridge suggests that Coleridge was not so much interested in the specific imagery as he was in the process described in the foregoing passage. The darting forth and the twirling of the crocodiles, for instance, seems akin to the coiling and swimming of the water-snakes in "The Ancient Mariner," and it is also faintly reminiscent of the serpentine path of sound,[2] previously mentioned in the discussion of "The Ancient Mariner."

Jotted in the same notebook, immediately following the crocodile description, was an image which combined both snake and bird in one. Moreover, it was described in Bartram's Travels as a real creature.

> Perhaps--the Snake-bird with slender longest neck, long strait & slender bill, glossy black, like fish-scales except on the breast which is cream-coloured--the tail is very long of a deep black tipped with a silvery white; & when spread, represent an unfurled fan. They delight to sit in little peaceable communities on the dry limbs of trees, hanging over the still waters, with their wings & tails expanded--I suppose to cool themselves,

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Biographia Literaria, p. 173. See chpt. 1, p. 6, n.

> when at the same time they behold their images below--when approached, they drop off as if dead--invisible for a minute or two--then at a vast distance their long slender head & neck only appear, much like a snake--no other part to be seen except sometimes the silvery tip of the Tail.[1]

If this passage links to the dove and snake in "Christabel," it is equally clear that here Coleridge was not so much interested in the process, as he was in the visual image. The diffusion of black and white in the tail of the bird and the diffusion of the black and cream color on the neck and breast were visual manifestations corresponding in some ways with the diffusion of sounds in the auditory sense.

Thus, Coleridge found a material essence which was compatible with the process evidenced in "Christabel." The heaving and swelling of the crocodile in producing sound was a natural process, not in the realm of magic. But Coleridge linked a natural process, grounded in experience, with a highly abstract rendition of good and evil. In "Christabel," the power of producing sounds creatively marked the slim margin between good and evil. Since the act of producing sounds required a more or less fluid or fluent state, the more static moral states changed only as they were linked with sounds. Like colors that diffused, good and evil were transformed accordingly as they were

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[1]Coburn, op. cit.

affected by the diffusion of sound. The diffusion of sound, however, could be seen only as it was reflected in the creative abstractions which it produced. An example of this principle in action can be seen in Coleridge's experience with Sarah Hutchinson. In love and unable to marry her, Coleridge justified his feeling for her through an abstraction directly linked to the diffusion of sounds. A verbal relationship could in part accomplish what a physical relationship could not. One was good, and the other was evil. Therefore, he filled his notebooks with constant references to her--some of them thinly disguised. By creating new combinations of sounds with which to soothe his suffering, he retained his spiritual goodness. He noted in the Gutch notebook written before he had composed the three poems,

> Poetry--excites us to artificial feelings--
> makes us callous to real ones.[1]

And the love itself retained its constructive aspect by his linking it to the creative use of sound. Coleridge summed it up in an 1803 notebook:

> My nature requires another Nature for its support & reposes only in another form the necessary Indigence of its Being.--Intensely similar, yet not the same; or may I venture to say, the same indeed, but dissimilar, as the same Breath sent with the same force, the

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[1]Coburn I, 87 G. 81.

> same pauses, & with the same melody pre-imaged in the mind, into the Flute and the Clarion shall be the same Soul diversely incarnate.[1]

Bracy's dream shows the relationship between a serpent and a dove. Locked in a fear-provoking embrace that makes us shudder at its proximity to death and horror, the serpent and the dove participate in a mutual process--the dilation and constriction of the throat where sounds are produced. The breath of one sustains the breath of the other. Nevertheless, the bird had cried in distress; as Bracy says,

> I went and peered, and could descry
> No cause for her distressful cry;

Like the woman wailing for her demon-lover in "Kubla Khan," the dove's cries suggest distress from a daemonic source. The poet Bracy's solution is not to kill the snake, however. He would "clear yon wood from thing unblest" and vows,

> With music strong and saintly song
> To wander through the forest bare,
> Lest aught unholy loiter there.

Thus, he suggests that the cause of the dove's distress can be mitigated by the bard who produces sounds. The sounds of his poetry harmonize with the music of his harp. The cry of distress denotes the daemonic lust; the link of sound and vision of the poet denotes the transformation of the "unholy"

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[1]Coburn I, 1679 21.407.

into the sublime.

The swelling and heaving of the dove and snake, thus, was potentially both good and evil. Something akin to Coleridge's example is found in Boehme's Aurora.

> Therefore also is the terror or crack now so swelling and trembling; for it moveth the whole birth, and rubbeth itself therein, till it kindleth the fire in the hard fierceness, from whence the light taketh its original. Then the trembling crack becometh enlightened with the meekness of the light . . . .
>
> In this pressing through and turning about [of the wheel generated by the seven generating spirits] existeth the tone. . . .[1]

Coleridge's link with Jacob Boehme seems important to the writer not just because of the similarity between isolated bits of imagery in Boehme's writings with certain images of Coleridge, but because of the striking similarity in the process they reflected. "Hissing," for instance, was an important image for Boehme as it was for Coleridge. Furthermore, Boehme used it as a linking phenomenon. Diffusing through two eternal states, it participated dynamically in the process of becoming. To hiss was to penetrate through the dead outer structure or shell of that which was apparently dead to regeneration and then to return to the innermost holy state characterized by the eternal act of God.[2]

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[1]Boehme, The Aurora, p. 626.

[2]Jacob Boehme, The Aurora, trans. by John Sparrow, ed. by C. J. Barker and D. S. Hehner (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1960), pp. 542-544. Cf. pp. 475-478.

The innermost state was God's eternal process of birth and rebirth where love predominated over "wrath" but where "wrath" also participated in the process of becoming. And in the process the act of hissing somehow reflected or co-imaged itself with that which was both in the innermost birth and outer state.[1] Thus, although good and evil were twofold manifestations, Boehme insisted that the process itself was threefold. The danger in hissing appeared to be its non-rational character. Participating in both good and evil, it could have no real structural knowledge of either one. As Boehme pointed out in his "Dialogue of Two Souls," the soul which had succumbed to the pressures of "Mercurius," the quality of sound, was confused.

> She did not realize that she was a monstrosity, bearing the serpent image in her, by means of which the Devil got such power over her and access to her, and in which her good intentions were confounded and led away from God.[2]

This seems to point to the conclusion that Boehme realized, as Coleridge seems to have realized, that auditory power is capable of exciting vision but impervious to being structured

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[1] Ibid. Also see Coleridge's Essays & Lectures on Shakespeare, p. 287. Coleridge contended that sound aided logic in saying that the logical connection of thoughts was actually doubled by Shakespeare when he introduced "artificial and sought for resemblance of words."

[2] Jacob Boehme, The Way to Christ, trans. by John Joseph Stoudt (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 147.

itself. Nevertheless, auditory stimulation can have a powerful effect both on the emotions and the direction of the intellect. As in Coleridge's anecdote concerning the idiot and his clock, the auditory orientation of the idiot, while non-rational, was mighly motivational.

Although the foregoing explanation is highly complex, it can be justified to some extent by pointing to contrasts between Christabel and Geraldine which reflect two consequences of the use of the power to produce sound. Although Christabel's capacity for auditory productivity is comparatively strong, her strength is primarily non-rational. Nevertheless, it engenders faith of the kind unfolding, first, in her consciousness of unnamed sin,

> 'Sure I have sinn'd!' said Christabel,
> "Now heaven be praised if all be well!'

and augmenting with affirmation after the fatherly embrace of Geraldine which precipitated the "vision of fear, the touch and pain!"

> 'What ails then my beloved child?'
> The Baron said--His daughter mild
> Made answer, 'All will yet be well!'

Behind the affirmation of Christabel is a faith which is dynamically linked to her ability to diffuse sounds and yet perceive their continuity. Coleridge, interestingly, thought that, in many instances, memory itself was an act

of faith.[1]

Geraldine, on the other hand, seems to show her major strength in the visual and tactual effects she produces in revealing her bosom. Her power, in contrast with Christabel's, is unproductive. Even when she attains momentary mastery of Christabel, she seems to mirror the "ego-centric" passion which Boehme's soul aroused when she first focused her desire on the serpent-image, depicted as the fire-wheel of Mercury, wherein sound was enkindled.[2] The potentiality of a transcending vision is lost to Geraldine. The "eyes divine" are dimmed with confusion at the hissing.

> And like a thing, that sought relief,
> Full of wonder and full of grief
> She rolled her large bright eyes divine
> Wildly on Sir Leoline.

An example of the way in which she was tortured by her awareness of guilt is her reticence to lie down with Christabel earlier.

> Deep from within she seems half-way
> To lift some weight with sick assay/

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[1]Coburn I, 6 1.8. Coleridge said in an early sermon that faith produces action which legal and ceremonial adherence do not. It is motivational. This observation coincides with the writer's earlier contention that Coleridge's creative genius depended to some extent on his capacity to remember auditory components without their visual contexts until such time when he could fit them together in an expanded system.

[2]Boehme, The Way to Christ, op. cit.

And Geraldine's transformation to snake[1] suggests that the confusion may have stemmed from the contradiction of good and evil qualities within her. She shows traits of both dove and snake in the imagery chosen by Coleridge to represent her. She appears more dove-like than snake-like when she "couched her head upon her breast/ And looked askance at Christabel/" Nevertheless, she is definitely the snake with her eyes "shrunk in her head." Because Geraldine lacks auditory power, she suffers from an inevitable dichotomy. Thus, Geraldine lacks the auditory power which would free her from guilt. Christabel, on the other hand, displays the power to transcend through diffusion and thus attains a spiritual unity unknown to Geraldine.

The rigidity of Sir Leoline in judging Christabel adversely shows what the lack of understanding of the auditory power can signify. His judgment of Christabel was harsh and unjustifiable.

> His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
> His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,
> Dishonoured thus in his old age;
> Dishonoured by his only child/

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[1]Thomas Middleton Raysor, ed. Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), pp. 31-32. For Coleridge, allegoric meaning [which depends on visual or static linking] did not have the spontaneous emergence manifested by snakes, "which come out of their holes into open view at the sound of sweet music."

The apparent structure of the situation was one of disgrace brought on by his daughter's jealousy.

The "Conclusion to Part II" restates the danger of the dual orientation in terms of a visual-emotional union excluding sound. Unlike the foregoing parts of "Christabel," however, it is strangely devoid of either supernatural or preternatural images. A vision is introduced--a vision of a child who dances and sings:

> A little child, a limber elf,
> Singing, dancing to itself,
> A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
> That always finds, and never seeks,

And the father of the child, enchanted by the vision, utilizes his power to hurt the child with "words of unmeant bitterness." His defense is a kind of pleasure in dichotomy.

> Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
> At each wild word to feel within
> A sweet recoil of love and pity.

He enjoys forcing opposites together--

> Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
> thoughts so all unlike each other;

and like the father of Christabel, he disregards the power of sounds to diffuse through time and space and to fuse eventually into new unities.

If Coleridge consciously meant to show the power of sound in effecting the link between Christabel and Geraldine, he appears to have been working out a process of writing which also bore philosophic implications. These implications

correspond with Boehme's theories of a trinitarian principle of becoming manifested by a twofold principle of dialectic. They also bear an affinity with German transcendental emphasis upon act as the necessary ingredient of being or knowing. Auditory awareness, it has been pointed out, is of necessity involved with activity. Such a recognition is peculiarly linked to views that place great values on dynamic experience.

Thus, when "Christabel" is considered as a poem unfolding a process linked with a philosophic view, it seems to demonstrate a completeness belied by its apparent fragmentary form. The elaborate and sometimes contradictory assertions of Coleridge concerning the question of the poem's completion are not devoid of hints that Coleridge was deliberately side-stepping the issue and that perhaps in some ways Coleridge had said all he ever intended to say in the "fragment" of the poem. If this suggestion seems like utter folly in the face of overwhelming agreement by critics and scholars that "Christabel" has never been cast in any final form, the writer can at least point to several puzzling features in Coleridge's behavior toward his creation.

First of all, his deep disappointment with the poem's rejection suggests that Coleridge did expect his readers to derive some meaning from it. If the poem was primarily a

narrative based upon strange circumstances, he could hardly have expected the meaning of such a poem to emerge with any clarity without some kind of denouement. And Coleridge's widely discussed lecture on the nature of allegory suggests that "Christabel" could never have been planned as a narrative allegory of good and evil.

> Apollo be praised! Not a thought like it would ever enter of its own accord into any mortal mind; and what is an additional good feature, when put there, it will not stay, having the very opposite quality that snakes have--they come out of their holes into open view at the sound of sweet music, while the allegoric meaning slinks off at the very first notes, and lurks in murkiest oblivion--and utter invisibility.[1]

The poem's rejection by critics was a bitter pill for Coleridge. The Edinburgh Review, for instance, labeled it "utterly destitute of value, exhibiting from beginning to end not one ray of genius."[2]

Furthermore, the only evidence of any concrete denouement of the action of "Christabel" is the statement of Coleridge which resolved the poem in the transformation of Geraldine to Christabel's lover and a last-minute rescue from a disastrous marriage by the real lover.[3] This trite conclusion is somehow not consistent with Coleridge's state-

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[1] Raysor, op. cit.

[2] Poetical Works, p. 603.

[3] Ibid., p. 604.

ment that the reason for his failure to complete "Christabel" stemmed not from his weakness in executing the process but the "idea, an extremely subtle and difficult one."[1]

On the other hand, it seems that Coleridge did go out of his way to point to certain conclusions about the territory which the poem embraces. He seemed to be saying that sound was an especially important element in the poem in his insistence in the original preface that it was "founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables."[2] Furthermore, he said that the variation of seven to twelve syllables within a line, was not introduced "wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition, in the nature of the imagery or passion."[3] This statement appears to coincide with the writer's contention that Coleridge consciously attempted to utilize sound as a third dynamic component in uniting otherwise dichotomous elements.

It is also known, through his discussion of Wordsworth's possibilities as poetic philosopher, that Coleridge was intrigued with the idea of a "first genuinely

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 601.

[3] Ibid.

philosophic poem."[1] In view of Coleridge's entertainment of himself as prophet and philosopher, it would seem strange if he did not at some time attempt a philosophic poem himself.

As with "Kubla Khan," there are indications that Coleridge chose to cloak "Christabel" with an aura of mystery. Perhaps it is significant that his efforts in this vein seem to echo Boehme's insistence upon the mystery of his work, The Aurora. There are peculiar similarities. Both men insisted that their works were interrupted by unforeseen circumstances. And Boehme also emphasized sound. He drew attention to it near the end of his book with a strange reference to his spelling of the word "Mercurius" with an "A" instead of an "E."[2] According to Boehme, it had some unexplained mystical purpose; nevertheless, the note served to draw attention or to single out sound from the other qualities with which Boehme was concerned. As a pure speculation, it would have been an interesting parallel for Coleridge to attempt if he had hoped that his work might ever be judged in comparison with the views of Jacob Boehme.

Evidence that Coleridge had no thought of actually completing the poem is slight, but there is some indication that he may not have been as eager to extend its length as

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[1] Biographia Literaria, p. 275.

[2] Boehme, The Aurora, p. 723.

it has been supposed. The declaration of Coleridge's nephew on the subject strengthens this observation. Although his uncle's assertions about finishing the poem were well known to him, he insisted that, in his opinion, Coleridge had not ever conceived a definite plan for the poem and that

> the poem had been composed while they were in habits of daily intercourse, and almost in his presence, and when there was the most unreserved intercourse between them as to all their literary projects and productions, and he had never heard from him any plan for finishing it.[1]

Nevertheless, it is certainly puzzling that Coleridge would have insisted, as he did in 1800, that he had written a much longer version of the poem. On two occasions at least, he said that the poem was running to 1300 or 1400 lines.[2] No additional lines to the poem, however, have been discovered. But the announcement of his intention to finish the poem, which was part of the original preface, was finally deleted entirely by Coleridge in 1834.[3] If Coleridge had deliberately attempted to encourage a vigorous perusal of the poem's deeper meanings, he could surely not have found a more effective method than by keeping it in the limelight as he did through obscuring its creation.

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[1] Poetical Works, p. 604.

[2] Ibid., pp. 602-603.

[3] Ibid., p. 601.

The puzzling features of Coleridge's own behavior toward his poem are less obscure in the light of an attempt to encourage speculation about a poem whose meanings for the time being at least were not generally understood.[1]

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[1] Poetical Works, p. 374. In Act II, Scene II of his play, "Remorse," we see evidence of Coleridge's faith that in time the unseen becomes visible.

> TIME, as he courses onward, still unrolls
> The volume of Concealment.
> In the FUTURE,
> As in the optician's glassy cylinder,
> The indistinguishable blots and colours
> of the dim PAST collect and shape themselves,
> Upstarting in their own completed image
> To scare or to reward.

CHAPTER V

A SUMMARY OF THE STUDY OF SOUND IMAGERY IN COLERIDGE

An analysis of sound imagery in the three poems, "Kubla Khan," "The Ancient Mariner," and "Christabel," was undertaken to determine (1) the importance of such imagery in realizing the meaning of the poems and (2) possible sources for the origin of the imagery. At the same time the writer was interested in exploring any role played by sound imagery in relation to Coleridge's theory of imagination--particularly that which stated the importance of diffusion. The imagination, according to Coleridge, must both diffuse and dissipate in order to re-create.

Coleridge's notebooks, his mental habits, and his ability to remember large quantities of apparently unrelated data all show marks of his concern with the diffusion of sounds. He noted that sound diffuses everywhere in nature. He also noted that young children could remember isolated sounds better than visual structures. He speculated on the diffusion of sound with emotion in a peculiar anecdote about an idiot and a clock, which reappeared in letters and notes. An awareness of sound extended to his speculation upon the nature of man, who was basically audible whereas nature was visible. His memory, it was found, appeared to

be an especially strong auditory one. Without the necessity of existing structures, he could frame new sensory experiences with new perceptions through a kind of holding action. A good summary of his own estimation of this faculty is the following note taken from a notebook in 1803:

> Nothing affects me much at the moment it happens--it either stupifies me, and I perhaps look at a merry-make & dance the hay of Flies, or listen entirely to the loud Click of the great Clock/ or I am simply indifferent, not without some sense of Philosophic Self-Complacency--For a thing at the moment is but a thing of the moment/ it must be taken up into the mind, diffuse itself thro' the whole multitude of Shapes & thoughts, not one of which it leaves untinged . . . .[1]

Coleridge, then, was aware that for him sensory stimuli were perceived not as immediate structures automatically linked to other similar structures, but as perceptions diffused in time. It is significant that he seemed to realize that in freeing him from the rigid structures of the past, the process of diffusion actually aided his thinking. An example of the poet's recognition of this tendency was found in one of his Shakespeare lectures:

> I take far, far more pains than would go to the set composition of a lecture, both by varied reading and by meditation; but for the words, illustrations, &c., I know almost as little as any one of the audience (that is, those of any thing like the same education with myself) what they will be five minutes before the

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[1]Kathleen Coburn, ed. The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, vols. I and II (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1961), 1597 21.357 (First no. indicates entry no. All entries are listed numerically rather than by page.)

> lecture begins. Such is my way, for such is my nature; and in attempting any other, I should only torment myself in order to disappoint my auditors--torment myself during the delivery, I mean; for in all other respects it would be a much shorter and easier task to deliver them from writing.[1]

He seemed to realize that his gift enabled him to avoid relying on preconceived attitudes; thus, he could think creatively and spontaneously, depending on the diffusion process to effect links and perceive affinities much as certain tones seem to have an affinity for others in music. The disadvantage was that, in thinking in this manner, he often tended to confuse those who immediately searched for relevancies to existing structures or those who could not assimilate events separated in time but immediately exercised judgment of whatever he said. Perhaps this explains the tendency of some of Coleridge's contemporaries to reject "Christabel" without appreciating the intricate thought processes involved in creating it. The process could not readily be grasped without going through the diffusion experience before reflecting on the poem as a whole. By this sort of process, the unity of all three of Coleridge's poems can be appreciated.

Coleridge's propensity toward diffusion was

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[1]S. T. Coleridge, Coleridge's Essays & Lectures on Shakespeare & Some Other Old Poets & Dramatists (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Repring, 1914), p. 9.

paralleled by a similar tendency in the great German mystic Jacob Boehme. In his theorizing, Coleridge found a threefold process which operated within a dichotomous framework visibly marked by distinctions of good and evil. Good and evil were diffused everywhere, but the threefold process operated without distinction. That which was the diversifying or distinguishing spirit was Mercurius or sound. Boehme thought that all the powers or spirits of life constantly generated each other. And that which diffused throughout all, whenever they were engaged in dynamic regeneration, was the tone.

Coleridge's definition of the imagination, in which he said that it diffuses and dissipates in order to re-create, bears striking resemblances to Boehme's theory of sound. Sound, according to Boehme, could not image or frame, but it could and did apply the "distinction or difference in the imaging or shaping."[1] Coleridge's definition of imagination stressed its shaping power, and his emphasis on diffusion could be evidence that his thinking also included some of Boehme's speculations on sound. An analysis of Coleridge's three poems seems to bear this out.

It was found that the three poems, "Kubla Khan," "The Ancient Mariner," and "Christabel," were similar in

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[1]See n. 3, p. 15. chpt. I.

their emphasis upon imagery which was strikingly auditory as well as visual. But perhaps the most far-reaching result of the analysis of sound imagery was the discovery that the relationship of sound to other sensory stimuli appeared to be thematically developed in all three poems.

In "Kubla Khan," the effects of diffusion differ in the two parts. The difference appeared to be the order in which sound was used as a diffusing agent. As part of an initial stimulus the sound elements activated a process resulting in increased vision. But chaos resulted when sounds were sought for their own sake. In the first part of the poem the use of sound imagery was productive of the vision of the sunny dome with caves of ice. The vision was a consequence of the combination of the visible pleasure dome and the audible measures of fountain and cave. In the second part, the use of sound imagery was productive for the dreamer only as a narcissistic dream of his own power.

Several images in "Kubla Khan" suggest similar images in Boehme's writing not only because they were placed in similar contexts but because they were linked to a system in which sound was a dynamic component. If, as the writer suggests, Coleridge somehow associated his Mount Abora with The Aurora of Jacob Boehme, one more evidence of the multiplicity of sources from which the poet derived his images is established. The connection of the fleeting day-spring of

the soul, two Egyptian rivers,[1] and Milton's Mount Amara,[2] incorporated within one poetic image, may have been one more instance of the way in which Coleridge merged old imagery into new unities through the process of diffusion. It is also an instance of Coleridge's ability to perceive the unity in such diverse components as poetic symbolism, names of rivers, and the transcendent religious experience of Jacob Boehme.

The analysis of "The Ancient Mariner" showed a similar thematic treatment of sound in its relation to good and evil. The transmutation of sound and vision, as seen in the blessing of the water-snakes and in the flying of sounds to the sun, was the productive or good condition. Evil was exemplified by the shooting of the Albatross, which the writer linked with the paralysis of sounds. As in "Kubla Khan," it was found that when the mariner regarded sound as an object for his lust rather than as a dynamic stimulus to creative vision, he involved himself in a love for his own powers of speech which negated his affirmation of love for all creatures. Thus, as in Boehme's thinking, sound was an

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[1] John Livingston Lowes, The Road to Xanadu (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930), p. 374. Lowes points to the two rivers Abola and Astaboras as additional origins of Coleridge's image of Mount Abora.

[2] Ibid., pp. 374-375.

important factor in creating good and evil, for it was the link between the faculties of feeling and seeing.

A connection between the imagery of "fire-flags" used by Coleridge and similar imagery of Boehme's suggested that the following flight of sounds to the sun may have been meant to suggest the experience of the dawning in The Aurora. Several other images, including Coleridge's Nightmare Life-in-Death, were also traced to Boehme, not in an attempt to prove the ultimate source but to show that Coleridge may have consciously paralleled his process with Boehme's system.

The treatment of sound elements, however, appeared to be most complex in "Christabel." The theme apparently was a further treatment of the reconciliation of qualities usually distinguished as either visual or auditory. Geraldine's desire to gain mastery over Christabel, who demonstrated unusual auditory power, was structured as a lust for power ofer the ability to produce sounds. The process involved in the reconciliation of sound with vision seemed to be ingeniously reproduced by Coleridge in Bracy's dream of the snake and dove. Again the theme of evil was represented by Geraldine's failure to transform the power of sound into a productive vision. Her desire to emulate the mother of Christabel seemed to focus her attention inwardly upon her own image rather than to produce spiritual vision. The hissing of Christabel was considered evidence of auditory

power because it was linked to Boehme's use of the same image in linking what he called the dead, outer, comprehensible state with the inner divine condition. In both of the instances in which it was used in "Christabel," it was linked with the imaging of a snake both by Christabel and Geraldine.

A source for Bracy's dream was found in the Gutch notebook, supporting the contention that Coleridge planned the episode as a representation of the union of sound and vision. Both snake and dove were reconciled in one image of a snakebird, described in Bartram's Travels. An auditory process of dilation and constriction similar to the heaving and swelling of the snake and dove was described in a passage noting the antics of crocodiles.

Through applying the same process, even the so-called extraneous "Conclusion to Part II" reflects the consequences of a dual orientation excluding the appreciation of sounds. Thus, it can be shown that in demonstrating a complete process "Christabel" could be considered not just a fragment but a complete poem. Justification for this view is increased through a comparison of the philosophic implications of the poem not only with Boehme's theories but with ideas advanced by the German transcendentalists. The philosophy behind the poems seems to be consistent even if difficult to follow.

In all three poems, however, sound appeared to be a vital factor not only in aiding diffusion of auditory perception but in adding meaning to major visual images within the poem.

An explanation of the term diffusion, which Coleridge included in his definition of imagination, was also suggested from the findings of the study. Diffusion, as a poetic force, can be applied to the manner in which sound imagery is utilized by the poet. The diffusion of sound acts as a diversifying agent to expand the scope of meanings adhering to the visual images within the poem. By activating the process of diffusion, a poet is able to create distinctions of meaning which give the poem the shape which is peculiar to it and to it alone.

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